

G2 pages 12-13

'It is right that Guy Snowden should resign in the light of the verdict. The key issue is to make sure the public can retain full confidence in lottery.'

Wright's father, David, said yesterday: "I am just living from day to day and house to house. I don't know why they are targeting me."

The Sinn Féin chairman, Mitchell McLaughlin, called for the threats to be withdrawn. "Sinn Féin repudiates

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Sketch

Cook caught in the crossfire



Simon Hoggart

ROBIN Cook answered questions on Iraq yesterday. This made a change. It was a nice surprise to learn that MPs had any interest in the topic at all.

For the past few days British coverage of the situation has gone bonkers. It was like the Monty Python sketch called, I think, It's The Arts. They are interviewing someone called Arthur "Two Sheds" Jackson, a composer whose latest work is about to be premiered. He wants to talk about the composition; all they want to do is ask about his two sheds. So now every news programme goes something like this: Foreign Secretary, you've just spoken to Madeleine Albright.

Cook: Yes, I have, and I offered Britain full support in her attempts to build a coalition against Saddam Hussein, coupled with the promise that we would join in military action if necessary.

Interviewer: But Robin — may I call you Robin? — for how many days following the sinking of Ann Bullen did you consider making Mrs Regan your diary secretary?

Cook: As I said, all of us hope and pray that force will not be required. But it is clear from Saddam's previous actions that he is most unlikely to comply with the UN resolutions if the threat of force is not present.

Interviewer: Quite so, Rob. All right I'll call you Rob? Surely, Rob, it's unprecedented for a minister to make a public, personal attack on the competence of a civil servant he has just sacked.

Cook: Look, the important thing is that Saddam is making enough anthrax to fill two warheads per week. If we don't take action now, the world will have a very long time to regret it later.

Interviewer: But, Bobbly old boy — that all right with you? — are you seriously pro-

posing to take your fancy woman with you to the States? Doesn't this imply that you have taken leave of your senses? Bobbly?

And so on. The excuse for all this stuff about Gaynor Regan — to which I have cheerfully contributed — is that it enables us to assess Mr Cook's judgment. But at the very time when Saddam Hussein is likely to test his judgment to its limits, we cannot judge that judgment because there's little in the papers except stuff about Mrs Regan and how she throws light on his judgment.

In fact, he put on a display of considerable calm and skill yesterday, not least because the real battle was going on behind him, among Labour MPs who feel able at last to relieve their deep, atavistic, endemic and all-consuming hatred of each other.

David Winnick (War Party, Walsall N) said that if we had listened to the critics, Kuwait would not have been freed in 1991. "Now we are accused of being the warmongers!"

Mr Dale Campbell-Savours (War, Workington) was sitting directly in front of Mr Tony Benn (Peace at all costs, Chesterfield). But he turned painfully round to congratulate Mr Winnick in the most public way he could manage.

Gerald Kaufman (War Now!, Gorton) told Mr Cook to pay no attention to those MPs "who, seven years ago, scurried off to truckle favour with Saddam Hussein while he was holding British people hostage," a reference to Mr George Galloway (Peace, Glasgow Kelvin).

Jeremy Corbyn (Peace, Islington N) begged: "Should we not be looking for a truly peaceful solution to this problem?" Hasounded like John Lennon in his declining years, Mr Cook replied drily that it was difficult to see in that question where the germs of a peaceful solution might be found.

In the end the only (very indirect) reference to Mrs Regan came from Mr Cook himself when, asked to comment on an article in the Mail on Sunday, said it was "probably as unreliable" as many other reports in that paper recently. Heavens! Commons debates important topics shock! Never mind; tomorrow they return to debate the greatest scandal since last month's scandal.

Saddam refuses to open secret sites □ US seeks support for air strikes □ Israel prepares missiles

Iraq denies weapons offer



Volunteers training to defend Iraq in case of US attack chant anti-US slogans yesterday in Baghdad. PHOTOGRAPH BY KAHN SAHIB

Iran Black and Ewen MacAskill in London and Julian Borger in Jerusalem

THE United States and Britain were last night still locked on a collision course with Saddam Hussein as Russian mediators struggled to win concessions to avert a military outcome to the crisis over United Nations weapons inspections.

After a confusing flurry of statements, Baghdad insisted it had not agreed to allow UN inspectors into off-limits presidential palaces — though the reported offer had already met a hostile reception in Washington and London.

Iraq denied Russian claims that President Saddam was willing to meet the chief UN arms inspector, Richard Butler, to discuss the stand-off that has brought threats of "substantial" US-led military action.

"The discussions are going on and they are quite, quite detailed," said Riyadh al-Qaisi, an Iraqi deputy foreign minister.

Russia was clearly eager for success. Boris Yeltsin telephoned Bill Clinton with news of the offer but reactions were swift and negative. Bill Richardson, the US ambassador to the UN, said bluntly: "This so-called compromise is unacceptable."

Tony Blair's spokesman was dismissive: "We need some convincing that this is any more than game-playing," he said. "I do not think it much changes where we are." Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, expected to consult Arab leaders later this week, told the Commons: "Although we are pursuing a diplomatic solution, we have not, nor will we, rule out the use of force."

"Without effective... monitoring Iraq could produce enough anthrax every week to fill two missile warheads and could within weeks be producing a large volume of nerve gas."

Russia had reported that President Saddam was ready to allow UN inspectors to visit eight previously closed "presidential" sites as representatives of their governments and to be accompanied by diplomats from the five perma-

nent members of the UN Security Council.

But the grounds adjoining the sites would be excluded from inspections — rendering the offer meaningless in the light of reports that great efforts have been made to conceal suspected chemical and biological weapons programmes.

Since last year President Saddam has refused to allow the UN to check some 60 sites, including about 40 presidential palaces, on grounds of national sovereignty. The UN is insisting on "full and unconditional access".

Yesterday's developments came after Mr Yeltsin warned that military action was "fraught with unpredictable consequences and would cause big casualties among civilians".

Israel began preparing its defences against the threat of an Iraqi attack by setting up US-made Patriot missiles near the Dimona nuclear reactor in the Negev desert.

Madeleine Albright, the US secretary of state, spent the day in Saudi Arabia as part of a Middle East and European tour to drum up support for air strikes.

She said that Washington and Riyadh had agreed that "if diplomacy fails to achieve a solution, Saddam Hussein will be responsible for the grave consequences".

Apart from Kuwait, only Britain has thrown its weight unconditionally behind Washington. Six Sea Harrier jump jets left their base at Yeovilton to join the carrier Illustrious in the Mediterranean, en route to replace HMS Invincible in the Gulf.

Mr Richardson said Washington would support a proposal by the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, to allow Iraq to increase its oil sales under the oil-for-food deal from \$2 billion (£1.25 billion) to \$5.2 billion to "prevent further deterioration in humanitarian conditions".

Iraq has been under stringent sanctions since it invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Living conditions have deteriorated, with malnutrition widespread and children dying for lack of medical care.

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Review

Byrne's night, complete with kilt

Adam Sweeting

David Byrne
Shepherds Bush Empire

SINCE the messy demise of Talking Heads, David Byrne has undergone several mystifying metamorphoses. He has published a book of photography, staged a travelling photographic exhibition, and created an audiovisual installation for a Japanese department store. His solo music has evoked a scientific interest in Latin and Caribbean music, funnelled through Byrne's Luaka Bop label, but his dabblings in ethno-musicology left his fan-base unconvinced. For while, he threatened to turn into a one-man band, hunkering round the globe with a guitar and a beat box.

Then came last year's album, *Feelings*. It was hailed with sighs of relief from fans and critics, who felt that Byrne had put an end to his dilettantish wanderings and returned to the kind of music-making he does best — limbo-twisting pop with cunning infusions of funk, poly-rhythms and Manhattan-loft artiness.

His slot at last year's Glastonbury festival met a lukewarm reception, but this Shepherd's Bush show was sharp, vivid and insanely infectious. You'd have to excavate deep into the Talking Heads archives to find a show to beat it, and the way Byrne adroitly matched highlights from his solo catalogue with carefully selected Heads songs threw a revealing new light on everything he's been doing for the last 20 years.

The trick was to find a bal-

ance between the two halves of Byrne's divided soul, the intellectually self-conscious performance artist and the innovative musician. With the aid of costume changes, a versatile backing band and bags of computer software, Byrne accomplished the feat with panache. Although updated by the late-Nineties gadgetry deployed by drummer/programmer Rea Mochlach and hi-tech pedal steel player Bruce Kaplan, the performance recalled the contagious mix of pop, R&B and studio trickery of the Heads' 1979 album *Fear of Music*.

Byrne has sometimes seemed to act out the appearance of weirdness, but there were flashes of real humour in this show. Not every performer would dare to change out of a natty electric-blue suit into kilt, T-shirt and clumping black boots, exposing his thin, hairy legs, but Byrne was having a wry laugh at his own "researcher man" he raved in *Dance On Vaseline*, skidding gleefully across the stage, "shoot me with your poison arrow!" He illustrated Miss America by pulling up the hem of his kilt, and ran ostentatiously on the spot for a super-catchy *Road To Nowhere*. For *Take Me To The River*, the trickery was rhetorical — "TAKE ME... to the river."

He had more devices up his sleeve, especially the third fluorescent body-suit he wore for *Psycho Killer*, making him resemble in part a Marvel Comics hero, in part an anatomical specimen. The crowd had surrendered long before that, though, and applauded Byrne with an enthusiasm he must sometimes have feared he would never hear again.

Paedophile allegation delays writer Clarke's investiture

Lucy Patton

THE investiture of science fiction writer Arthur C Clarke as a knight has been postponed after allegations in a Sunday newspaper that he was a paedophile.

The Prince of Wales was due to award a knighthood to Sir Arthur, aged 90, at a ceremony in Colombo tomorrow during a

four-day royal visit to Sri Lanka, but St James's Palace confirmed yesterday that the investiture had been postponed at Sir Arthur's request.

The Sunday Mirror report alleged he had admitted being a paedophile. Sir Arthur, British-born author of 2001: A Space Odyssey, said in a statement yesterday that he was outraged by the allegations and was seeking legal advice.

Railtrack ready to rescue Channel tunnel link

Tempting offer for Prescott would save project without extra state aid

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

RAILTRACK last night revealed that it is prepared to rescue the stricken £6 billion Channel Tunnel rail project without an extra state cash handout of £1.2 billion.

In an offer which the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, will find difficult to refuse, Railtrack sources

made it clear that the privatised company has the capital to save the 58 mile scheme from London to the Channel coast, but would have to secure the approval of shareholders.

Railtrack yesterday emerged as the only possible contender to take over the scheme from the failed London and Continental Railway consortium, which has collapsed with debts of £500 million. LCR's one-time rival,

EuroRail, backed by the National Westminster Bank, has pulled out of talks with the Government through lack of funds.

Railtrack's offer will be tempting for Mr Prescott. Last week LCR pulled out of the beleaguered project when Mr Prescott refused to hand over an extra £1.2 billion of taxpayers' money to the consortium, led by Richard Branson's Virgin group and National Express. LCR said it could not complete the project without the money, but Railtrack insists that it does not need it.

Railtrack and Mr Prescott

will start hard bargaining in the next month to get a deal. The biggest obstacle is likely to be Railtrack's insistence on a softer regulatory regime while it completes the project. Tougher rules are expected within three years, and Sir Bob Horton, Railtrack's chairman, will argue that a substantial commercial project cannot proceed while the company is in a straitjacket.

Mr Prescott has to persuade the rail regulator, John Swift, to go easy on Railtrack or the deal could collapse. The Government would then only have British Rail as an alternative, but without the back-

ing of the private sector. A government deal with Railtrack would bring a complete change in its relations with the Labour Party, which in opposition threatened to bring the company back into public ownership. Political uncertainty led to it being floated at a knockdown price of £1.9 billion two years ago, and investors made a killing.

A senior Railtrack source said: "We were once the black knight with the Labour Party. Now we are regarded as a potential white knight. How times change."

At last year's Labour party conference, Mr Prescott at-

tacked "fat cats" at Railtrack, including Archie Norman, chairman of ASDA, vice chairman of the Tory Party and a Railtrack director.

If Railtrack takes over the rail link, it will assume responsibility for the 1,000 people working on the project.

Doubts about the link have delayed the £400 million Thames 2000 rail scheme between towns to the north and south of London. This is a Railtrack project, but Glenda Jackson, the transport minister, said yesterday that the public inquiry might have to be postponed.

Grim circus routine of animal beatings

CIRCUS animals are being routinely beaten, whipped and clubbed by trainers, according to a report yesterday by animal rights campaigners.

The 18-month study into the use of circus animals by a group called Animal Defenders involved studying the animals, and working practices in winter quarters and travelling circuses.

The report, called *The Uglyest Show on Earth*, also drew on 400 hours of videotape which included scenes of beatings and long confinements.

One piece of footage featured an elephant being beaten relentlessly with an iron bar.

In another, an infant chimpanzee, 18 months old, is seen being kicked and whipped.

The report claimed that animals were frequently left locked up for long periods of time.

The study said one elephant spent 98 per cent of her time chained in a lorry or tent. Large cats were found to spend 75-80 per cent of their time in cages while horses were locked in their stables for 23 hours a day.

Animal Defenders director Jan Creamer said: "In over 20 years of studying the use of animals and campaigning for animal protection, this is the most appalling abuse I have ever seen."

"Elephants were beaten with pitchforks, shovels, el-

ephant hooks and anything else to hand — on one occasion the animal was brought to the ground screaming."

"It is time that the use of animals in circuses was abandoned and performing animal training centres brought under the Zoo Licensing Act."

In the absence of a ban on the use of animals in the circus trade, Animal Defenders is calling for zoo animals to be protected under the 1981 act which

'Elephants were beaten with pitchforks, shovels and anything else to hand'

regulates standards of animal welfare in zoos and safari parks.

But a spokesman for the Chipperfield circus family said its animals are all seen regularly by veterinary surgeons.

He said: "The companies all employ experienced veterinary surgeons who advise them. Where appropriate the local authority issues licenses for the premises and in order to get a licence they have to be inspected each year."

"Where animals are in quarantine they have to be visited every week by a ministry approved vet."

LVF threat of terror against Catholics

continued from page 1

any threat or any attempt to intimidate anyone on the basis of their religion," he said. "This is a time for neighbourly love."

Seamus Mallon, deputy leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, added: "It is very obvious there are people on both sides of the community who are prepared to use that type of threat to stir up even further sectarian hatred and to thwart the political process."

The LVF's threat comes four days after it promised to stop targeting "innocent Catholics", vowing instead to select what it called known republicans.

But just as the Irish National Liberation Army's murder of Wright, aged 37, was followed by LVF assassinations, so too were any threats against his family likely to be met with retaliation. There are also suggestions of a power struggle in the LVF, formed by Wright in 1996.

The INLA's political wing, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, denied issuing the threats against Wright's family.

A statement issued with a recognised codeword said: "The LVF wish to state that... if republicans do not come out and issue those statements of denial within the next 13 hours, the LVF will unleash an unholy war against the nationalist community. These type of sick death threats against the late Billy Wright's family will not be tolerated."

TOO MUCH TOO YOUNG

ROBERT CARLYLE is MESMERISING as JO JO

DAILY MIRROR

LOOKING AFTER JO JO IS NOW AVAILABLE ON VIDEO FROM ALL GOOD RETAILERS

BBC

Poetic justice 80 years on



Sassoon and the fight for sanity on home front

John Ezard

THE extent of high-level official panic over the activities of the idealistic, disillusioned first world war poet and army officer Siegfried Sassoon was disclosed yesterday.

More than 80 years after his unheeded warnings and lamentations, his official army papers show how keenly British intelligence tried to amass evidence which could be used to discredit and possibly destroy him.

Surveillance included apparently contradictory moves to emphasise the insanity of his calls for an end to the war and to explore whether he had issued some of these at a time when he would have been open to a court martial.

William Spencer, the Public Record Office's specialist adviser on military history, said the papers proved that a court martial was being considered.

"If Sassoon was going to be court-martialled it could have been for bringing the army into disrepute or conduct unbecoming an officer," he said.

Sassoon, who died in 1967, was a highly respected poet who had won the Military Cross during the war. He is best known now for befriending and encouraging Wilfred Owen and for fostering some of Owen's greatest poems.

His file is marked "not to be destroyed as it refers to a person of international importance". The papers include what is thought to be the original text of Sassoon's peace manifesto — sent to War Office intelligence by a member of the public who found it on the luggage rack of a train between Birmingham and Preston.

Another version of the manifesto had already been read to Parliament. But what alarmed intelligence services about its appearance on the railways was the fear that Sassoon had given it to pacifist groups who were using it to stir public discontent in the last year of the war.

Equal alarm was generated by a three-verse poem which the writer published in the leftish magazine The Nation — a forerunner of the New Statesman — in July, 1918. The poem, I Stood With the Dead, is about the grief loved ones would feel if they could see bodies on the battlefield.

The deputy director of military intelligence, brigadier-general George Cockerill, wrote a private letter to the Nation: "If Lieutenant Sassoon is now writing verse such as appeared in the Nation, it would appear that his mind is still in chaos and that he is not fit to be trusted with men's lives."

Pointedly, Cockerill also asked the magazine — "solely in the public interest" — exactly when Sassoon had sent it the poem. This is seen as an attempt to discover whether he was covered at the time by an army medical board finding of mental instability, or whether he was open to court martial.

The Nation's editor, Hugh Massingham, replied briefly that he had no clue when he had received the poem.

The newly discovered peace manifesto draft is now the only surviving record outside Hansard, which the novelist Pat Barker used for her Regeneration trilogy. Dated July 1917, it says the poet is "making this statement as an act of wilful defiance of military authority because I believe the war is being deliberately prolonged



Siegfried Sassoon, pictured (top left) during his wartime days and six years before his death. His mementoes were sold off in 1994 by his son, George

by those who have the power to end it.

"I am a soldier convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that the war upon which I entered as an act of defence and liberation has now become a war of aggression and conquest."

"I have seen and endured the sufferings of the troops and I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust."

"I am not protesting against the conduct of the war but against the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed. On behalf of those who are suffering now, I make this protest against the deception which is being practised on them."

The copy was sent by a Birmingham train passenger to Lord Derby, minister for army recruitment. The War

Office annotation says: "Lieutenant Sassoon was undoubtedly the author but, when it was written, he was a lunatic. It seems possible that some pacifists are circulating Sassoon's insane efforts."

However, no further copies were passed on by civilians to the authorities. This undermined the intelligence staff's conspiracy theory. In the summer of 1917 Sassoon had travelled by train to the medical board hearing which ruled that he was "suffering from a medical breakdown" and "not responsible for his actions".

This leads William Spencer to suspect that Sassoon had simply left his copy of the manifesto on the train. It was discovered on January 20, 1918, five months after Sassoon passed through the area, in what may be the most officially traumatic episode of absent-mindedness in literary history.

A life

□ 1886: Born near Paddock Wood, Kent. Brought up as country gentleman.

□ 1906-1912: First poetry published privately. Friend says: "He was always waiting for the spark from heaven to fall — and when it fell it was shrapnel."

□ 1915: Volunteers for war. Nicknamed 'Mad Jack' for bravery. Wins MC.

□ 1917: Wounded. Begins attacking war. Befriends Wilfred Owen. Declared mentally unstable.

□ 1918: Re-embarks on peacetime life as war poet. Writes Memoirs of a Fox Hunting Man.

□ 1967: Dies in Wiltshire.

I stood with the dead

*I stood with the Dead, so forsaken and still:
When dawn was grey I stood with the Dead.
And my slow heart said, 'You must kill, you must kill':
'Soldier, soldier, morning is red'.*

*On the shapes of the slain in their crumpled disgrace
I stared for a while through the thin cold rain.
'O lad that I loved, there is rain on your face,
'And your eyes are blurred and sick like the plain.'*

*I stood with the Dead... They were dead, they were dead,
My heart and my head beat a march of dismay:
And gusts of the wind came dalled by the guns.
'Fall in! I shouted: Fall in for your pay!'*

Clipping: search for a lost son

JULY 1915 Richard Kipling, the most acclaimed British and imperial poet of the early 20th century — published a book to help the war effort.

Called Songs of the English, a joint venture with the Daily Telegraph, it was an appeal for men to be used to build comfort and amenities for the troops.

It was months after his only son, John, aged 20, was reported missing at the battle of Loos and the music and hope went out of Kipling's song.

Many months later, however, by the Public Record Office, how in the depths of misery he refused to accept his son's death. This was despite the evidence that he was "unofficially" by the War Office — by soldiers who had seen him last fighting with a leg wound, then lying dead in a trench so shallow that it was understandable his body had not been found.

Nevertheless, more than a year after his son's disappearance, Kipling wrote begging the authorities not to list him off as dead.

He said the War Office: "He was wounded and left behind at 14 (a) on the battlefield on September 27, 1915. I have interviewed a great many people and have heard from many others and can find none who saw him killed and the wound, being a leg wound, would have been more conspicuous than that."

Reading the matter exceptionally gently, the War Office wrote: "The Public Record Office does not desire to proceed with the official recognition of death in opposition to the wishes of the poet."

It agreed to keep John on the missing list. Not until after the war, in 1919, was he listed as dead "through the lapse of time", as a letter to his father explained.

Kipling's son, however, died that he had seen his son was dead after a long but unsuccessful attempt to trace him in Germany. Kipling tried to perpetuate him by writing the official history of his regiment, The Irish Guards in the Great War. But according to one of his contemporaries, the author was subsequently passed over for the Poet Laureateship because he was drinking to his death.

He died in 1938, aged 72.

The 80-year mystery was solved only in the early 1990s, when the Ministry of Defence announced that it was satisfied it had traced and buried John Kipling's remains. British soldiers who were killed in the First World War.



Interviews and fiction

Early in his career, Kipling wrote a series of short stories for the Strand magazine. These were often set in India, where he had lived for many years.

His most famous work, The Jungle Book, was published in 1894. It is a collection of stories about a boy named Mowgli who is raised by wolves in the Indian jungle.

Kipling's writing was often praised for its vivid descriptions of the Indian subcontinent.

He was also known for his ability to write in a variety of styles, including the short story, the novel, and the autobiography.

Kipling's work has been adapted for film and television many times over the years.

His legacy as a writer is still felt today, and his work continues to be read and studied.

After 13 years on death row, time runs out for female killer



Karla Faye Tucker: double killer faces execution tonight

Joanna Coles in Huntsville, Texas

BARRING an unlikely last-minute stay from the White House, Karla Faye Tucker, the double murderer who has spent 13 years on death row, will make grim history tonight as the first woman to be executed in Texas since the Civil War.

Yesterday the state board of pardons and paroles unan-

mously rejected her application for clemency, arguing it could not make an exception because she was a woman.

Tucker, aged 38, has lodged an appeal with the supreme court, but it is not expected to succeed. The execution, by lethal injection, is scheduled to take place tonight at 6pm local time (midnight GMT). Tucker, who became a practising Christian six months after her arrest in 1983, will be only the second woman to

be executed in the United States since the death penalty was reintroduced in 1976.

Tucker's case has gripped the country, earning her support from unlikely corners and refocusing the debate on the death penalty in Texas. The state is known as the US execution capital: 37 men on death row died last year, more than a third of the country's total. The state has six more women on death row.

Among those supporting

Tucker's appeal is Pat Robertson, the rightwing television evangelist more commonly known for espousing capital punishment. The Pope has asked the Texas governor, George Bush, to consider a stay.

Yesterday Mr Bush, son of the former president, who has not commuted a death sentence since he was elected three years ago, said gender was irrelevant. He was concerned with only two things:

was she guilty and had she had adequate redress to the courts.

Tucker has said she is not afraid to die but feels she has more work to do deterring young people from crime. "It's all up to Him," she has said, referring to God. "He'll touch whoever He needs to if He wants to stop it. I leave it in God's hands."

Still hoping for a last-minute intervention from the supreme court, Tucker's lawyer,

David Botsford, said there was no question she had changed. "She is clearly not the same person," he said yesterday. "Her death will not serve any purpose other than pure capital vengeance."

Tucker was found guilty of murdering Jerry Lynn Dean and Deborah Thornton with a pickaxe in 1983. High on drugs, which she had taken since her mother introduced her to marijuana at the age of eight, she told the court she

had an orgasm every time she swung the axe.

Between her arrest and the trial, the drug-addicted prostitute discovered Christianity, gave up drugs, underwent a personality change and married the prison chaplain. Dean's sister, Peggy Kurtz, and Thornton's brother, Ronald Carlson, say they believe her transformation and support her appeal.

62, Front



From March 29th this year, Singapore Airlines will fly three times a day, instead of twice, direct from London to Singapore every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. In addition, we will also fly direct from

Manchester to Singapore five times a week instead of four. The result will be that Singapore Airlines makes more direct flights a week from London and Manchester to Singapore than anyone else in

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Patient claims culture persists at Ashworth, where nurses were made 'security guards' to crack down on gangs and pornography

Drugs 'rife' at top security hospital

David Ward

DRUGS brought in by visitors still circulate on the wards of a top security hospital at the centre of an investigation into drug abuse and pornography, a patient claimed yesterday.

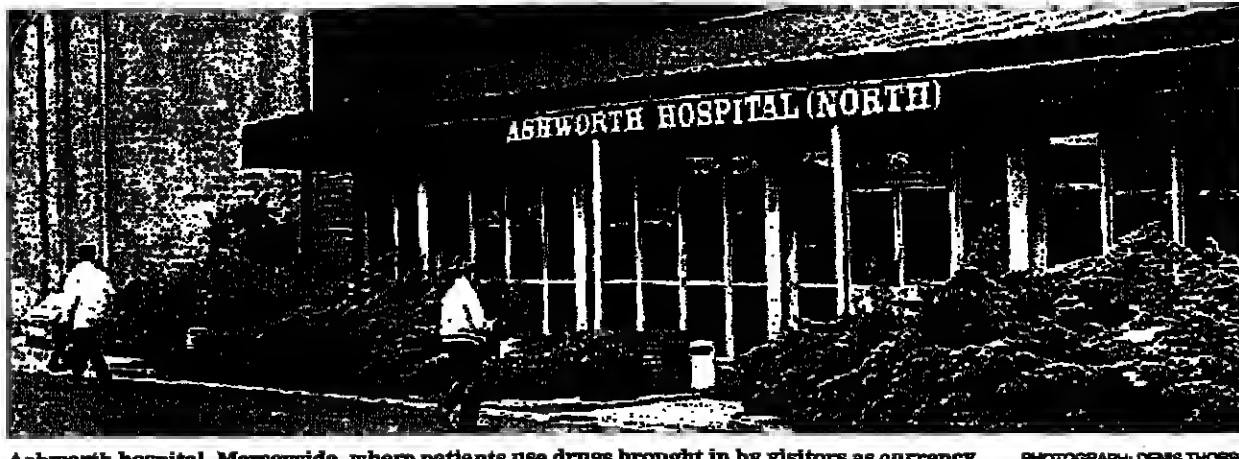
Patient B, a resident for 10 years, was one of the first to give evidence when the judicial inquiry into the running of Ashworth hospital on Merseyside moved from London to take evidence in a recreation hall inside the hospital.

He described a gang and drug culture which had existed until a clampdown two years ago. He welcomed the change, but complained that nurses had now been turned into security guards.

"Drugs are used as currency in here because we are not allowed money," he said. "I think it will be an ever-present problem. I don't think you will ever get rid of it... You cannot stop people having visitors and wanting drugs. Where there's a will, there's a way."

The inquiry, which began taking evidence last November, was set up by the former health secretary, Stephen Dorrell, following allegations of drug misuse, paedophile activity and the availability of pornography in the personality disorder unit (PDU). A former patient also claimed that an eight-year-old girl was smuggled into the hospital on several occasions.

"I don't use drugs but I would say there are fewer drugs in the hospital now," continued Patient B, aged 38. "The emphasis put on pornography in the security system was a 'last-stance problem'."



Ashworth hospital, Merseyside, where patients use drugs brought in by visitors as currency

PHOTOGRAPH: DENIS THORPE

raphy in the security system was a "last-stance problem". Before the security crackdown, he had tried to keep clear of "politics and skulduggery" among the 476 patients.

Pornography, he added, was a "last-stance problem". Before the security crackdown, he had tried to keep clear of "politics and skulduggery" among the 476 patients.

He added: "But the situation became untenable because people were having to take sides, join gangs for security."

I didn't want to join. It was mental intimidation rather than physical... If you didn't join a gang you felt very isolated."

He told the tribunal, chaired by retired judge Peter Fallon QC, that he had asked to be moved to another ward. When nothing was done, he smashed up a television and doctors had then recognised his distress.

Asked if gangs still existed, he said the gang culture was nothing like it had been but there was still a hierarchy among patients on every ward. "On some, it's the biggest [patients], the most formidable. On others, the most intelligent, the most cunning. On others, it's how affluent they are and how many friends they have."

Of drugs he added: "I'm aware of groups of lads in the hospital who will get together to smoke a bit of dope. But they are not there to intimidate anyone, but there is a group that enjoys smoking dope."

He said he had come into the hospital as "Mr Average" and had learned to survive by using manipulative behaviour. "It's like a village in here with walls. Everything that happens, everyone knows about."

He also described how two psychologists responsible for an anger management course at the hospital had a fight in the car park.

He feared that the new tough line on security meant nurses had to take their turn in keeping a 24-hour watch on corridors.

"It means a staff nurse has to spend an hour sitting on a corridor like a night watchman at a factory," he said. "He is not doing therapy, not interacting with his patients. Patient care is now secondary. It's a waste to put people of that calibre on night watchman duty."

Commentator attacks South African hero

Walden dismisses 'feckless' Mandela

Ruairidh Nicoll

EVEN the greatest find their lives re-evaluated, and tonight it is the turn of the most untouchable of them all, Nelson Mandela.

Brian Walden, much lauded commentator and former Labour MP, attacks Mandela as ineffectual, arrogant, feckless and autocratic during a monologue about the South African president on BBC2.

"Nelson Mandela, perhaps the most generally admired figure of our age, falls short of the giants of the past," he says in his series, *Walden on Heroes*.

"It is indeed a heroic virtue to forgive one's enemies. Abraham Lincoln shared that with Nelson Mandela, but he combined it with a ruthless determination to make sure that his nation didn't lapse into folly, which is something Mandela hasn't been able to match."

While MPs expressed fury at the comments — "Brian Walden has lost his marbles," said Ann Clwyd, MP for Cynon Valley — many South Africans thought Mr Walden had no grasp of the depths in Mandela's character.

"To say Mandela's greatest gift is forgiveness is an extremely facile view," said Philip van Nieuwerkerk, editor of South Africa's Mail & Guardian newspaper.

"Mandela's greatest achievement was as an astute politician. He does have great failings but as a politician



Brian Walden: TV pundit who has 'lost his marbles'

think he has to be compared to the giants of the past."

During the half-hour broadcast, the last of the series, Mr Walden charts Mandela's rise through South Africa's troubled times and concludes that it was marred by incompetent decisions.

He claims the freedom fighter's move to violence can be traced to his affair then marriage to Winnie. "Mandela's plunge into violence shows him at his worst," he says, not because it was unjustified but because he "approached the whole thing with unbelievable amateurism and fecklessness."

The earlier signing of the Freedom Charter, the linchpin of the ANC non-racialist

philosophy, was, according to Walden, an act of naivety.

"He was very lucky to escape hanging," says Mr Walden. "What Mandela had done was to destroy black nationalism for over a decade, and he'd entrenched the National Party in power."

The commentator continues that international opinion, sanctions or black nationalism had little to do with the end of apartheid.

"Apartheid collapsed because of the dominant force of our age: business. It's ironic that the National Party, whose purpose was to produce greater Afrikaner prosperity, by doing so ruined itself."

Mr Walden also says that the way South Africa's future president negotiated his freedom from prison and the unmaking of the ANC was "high-handed" and "typical of Mandela".

Once he was released, Walden says the violence that flared between the ANC and Inkatha was partly Mandela's fault. "Mandela handled this very badly indeed. He didn't see Buthelesi often enough to reassure him, nor was he persuaded that Buthelesi had any real influence with the Zulus."

Mr Van Nieuwerkerk believes that Mr Walden has considered only the surface of the events. "I think that at the time [of his negotiations with the National Party] he quite masterfully understood the dynamics of the situation," he said. "To have achieved what he did makes that his moment of genius, his finest moment."

A number of MPs say they intend to table motions in the Commons, rejecting Walden's attack. "This is a disgraceful and demeaning attack on one of the great figures of politics of the 20th century," said Barry Sheers, Labour MP for Huddersfield.

Mandela himself is unlikely to be ruffled by the criticism. "It sounds quite superficial," said Joel Netshitenzhe, one of the president's advisers. "The best testament to Nelson Mandela's place in history, especially of bringing people together, is the appreciation felt towards him in South Africa, across the African continent, and around the world."



Nelson Mandela: 'He was lucky to escape hanging,' says Walden. 'He destroyed black nationalism for a decade and entrenched National Party in power'

PHOTOGRAPH: DON MAPHES

Police to spy on bars and clubs in effort to stop drink-drivers

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

INCREASED police powers to stake out premises and breathalyse a member of the public without prior suspicion are included in plans to reform the drink-driving laws, published by the Government yesterday.

The police would be able to keep watch on licensed premises where they thought there was excessive drinking. They would be allowed to maintain a surveillance for up to 48 hours if they thought considerable bouts of drinking were involved.

The Transport Minister, Gavin Strang, yesterday asked the public for comments on a range of ideas over the next three months as the Government moves towards tightening the drink-driving laws, probably by the end of the year. Legislation is expected in the next parliamentary session.

Police are already empowered to stop and search people under the Knives Act, if they think they could be in possession of a dangerous weapon. The Government believes it could move in this direction on drink-driving cases.

Dr Strang said the Government was attracted to the idea of effectively limiting drivers to one drink with a lower level penalty system of 50mg of alcohol per 100mls of blood. This would be subject to a fine instead of a ban. Drivers with more than 80mg — the driving limit — would be subject to the usual disqualification and fine or imprisonment.

The Government's consultation document suggests two different forms of do-it-yourself tests. One would be a compulsory ignition interlock device which would prevent a car from starting if the driver was found to be over the limit after blowing into a dashboard mounted nozzle.

The second would involve the use of cheap disposable DIY breath tests, available from shops or pubs. They would be used on a voluntary basis by motorists to check whether they were legally

able to drive the morning after a drinking session or on their way home.

Dr Strang said the Government would look at "ignition interlock devices" which stop cars from starting unless the driver provides an alcohol-free breath sample. These devices have already been used in the United States, but are expensive.

The drink-driving curbs could hit rural pubs, where public transport is limited, but Dr Strang insisted that under any new legislation, somebody going out for a night could survive on two pints of ginger beer shandy and soft drinks.

He added: "I could still have a good night out on that."

Save our Country Pubs, an organisation representing a number of small breweries, reported: "A new curb on drink-driving would sound the death knell for many of us."

Somebody going out could survive on two pints of ginger beer shandy

"A third of us would be forced to close within two years."

But Dr Strang's announcement received general support from the police and safety groups.

The Association of Chief Police Officers, the British Medical Association, and the Automobile Association, backed a lowering of the limit. "There is massive public support for bringing down the limit," said the AA. "But what is really needed is more breath testing powers for the police so that they can target persistent drink-drivers who ignore the present limit."

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents said: "We believe that in two to three years the limit should be lowered further. We want to see a 'none for the road' by the year 2000."

Leader Comment, page 6

What's the best thing you can get out of a dead end job?

Yourself.

The Guardian.
More jobs than any other national quality newspaper.

139 MPs oppose Blair stand against ageism law

Seumas Milne
Labour Editor

AGE discrimination will not be outlawed despite a survey finding that 18 million people claim to have suffered it, and four out of five workers over 50 believe they have been turned down for a job because of their age.

The Government will instead try to persuade employers to hire older workers, only resorting to legislation if a voluntary code of practice fails.

By last night 139 MPs — 109 of them Labour — had signed a parliamentary motion supporting a private member's bill to outlaw age discrimination in job adverts. The bill is due to have its second reading on Friday.

Both the TUC and the charity Age Concern, which yesterday launched an Age Discrimination Week, expressed disappointment that the Government will not back the measure — although employment minister Andrew Smith said he was glad the bill would raise the issue's profile.

The Gallup survey published yesterday by Age Concern found 70 per cent of

people believe age discrimination exists, while the Employers' Forum on Age found 80 per cent of workers over 50 believe they had been turned down for a job because they were too old.

Although discrimination is found across the age range, most complaints by far are from over-45s. Sometimes they feel it is direct, sometimes the result of cost, skill or institutional factors.

Mervyn Muford, for example, is a 48-year-old science teacher with more than 20 years' experience. In 1995, he was made redundant from his Devon school in a cuts programme. Although science teachers are in short supply, Mr Muford has now made more than 150 job applications in vain, and believes schools are more likely to opt for a newly-qualified teacher on £14,000-£15,000 a year, rather than someone of his experience, on £22,000. "It seems half the working population is being written off after a certain age," he said.

Legislation to outlaw age discrimination was one of Labour's promises — made by both employment spokespeople, Harriet Harman and



Kay Godly, 50, whose job club told her and others to leave age off CV, as it might not be 'helpful' PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ANGLIS

Ian McCartney, in 1995. But it fell victim to the "bonfire of commitments" ordered by Tony Blair in the summer before the general election. Hence Labour's manifesto promised "action" rather than legislation.

Mr Smith said he was not "ruling out legislation as a possibility for the future", but it risked adding to "burdens on business" and leading the Gov-

ernment into a legal minefield. Instead, he promised to consult trades unions, employers and agencies like Age Concern about a code that would "work with business and encourage best practice". There was, he said, an "enormous reservoir of experience, skill, talent and maturity among older people", and it was "crazy as well as unfair to consign them to the scrapheap".

'People should have a chance to show what they can do'

AFTER her local dole office sent 50-year-old Kay Godly to Hendon Job Club in October, she was warned not to put her age on her CV when applying for jobs. It might not be "helpful", she and others were told, writes Seumas Milne.

But employers are not so easily fooled. One of the many to reject an application of hers for secretarial work — with her impressive CV and record of 20 years' office experience — was Eric Morley, chairman of the Miss World organisation.

After thanking her for her letter, he continued: "One important item you have left out of your CV is your date of birth," signaling off without another word.

"It really stung me," Ms Godly said. "I knew age discrimination existed, but getting first-hand experience of it was another mat-

ter. It was uncalled for and very unfair."

A single parent with three grown-up children, Ms Godly said she had been warned about the "age thing" when she took redundancy from the public services union Unison in 1995, after 10 years as a secretary at its Golders Green office in north London.

She had felt it was "time to move on," but soon found her IT skills were out of date. So she did what the Government encourages and upgraded her skills — achieving NVQ Level 2 in Business Studies at a local college, and learning various word-processing packages.

However, in the last three months she has applied for 34 jobs, and had five unsuccessful interviews. "I'm not having much luck," she said. Age appears to be part of the problem. "People should be given a chance," she said, "rather than getting the door shut in your face before you can show what you can do." She believes legislation would help — but firms might find ways round it. "They don't have to employ you, do they?"

Verdict opens Pandora's box

Glimpse of murky backdoor to lottery glitz

Kamal Ahmed on the implications of the Panorama interview libel hearing

HE TWIDLED his thumbs. He stared at the floor. With his wife on one side and his secretary on the other, he saw his business career crumble before him.

Guy Snowden tried to bribe Richard Branson. Seven words which signify the greatest crisis Britain's national lottery has faced. Millions of pounds and some big reputations are at stake and the spotlights are set to rove after other targets.

At 4.30pm yesterday, the jury had deliberated for just two hours. Asked if they found for Branson or Snowden, the foreman answered in a clear voice: "Mr Branson". With one punch, Mr Snowden was out.

There was a flicker of a smile on Mr Branson's face, with a cheer saved for outside the courtroom.

Already, the questions are piling up. Mr Snowden was the head of the company, G-Tech, which owns a 22.5 per cent stake in Camelot, national lottery organisers. He has already resigned — but what of G-Tech which is still in a position to take a share of Camelot's £70 million a year profits?

Peter Davis, director general of Oflot, the government body charged with policing the lottery, had said that after exhaustive inquiries G-Tech and Mr Snowden were deemed fit and proper to have a stake in the lottery. But is his position still secure?

The process for bidding to win the next seven-year licence to run the lottery, beginning in 2001, starts in earnest this year. Will Camelot be allowed to enter the battle?

A difficult question. A light has been shone on the world behind the facade of "It Could Be You".

Only one man is smiling — that big, toothy smile associated with everything from condoms to hot air balloons. British Airways tried and failed to land a punch. G-Tech

tried and failed to land a punch. Richard Branson was telling the astonishing truth all along.

The kernel of this lottery disaster starts just about as far from the world of back street dealing as it is possible to be. The graceful curve of Holland Park in west London stretches away from the rather racier streets of Notting Hill and towards the more genteel, and eminently richer, surroundings of Kensington.

In one of the beautiful Georgian houses lives Richard Branson: British son of a barrister, public school educated, billionaire.

On a warm autumn day in September 1993 he was expecting a lunch guest, Guy Snowden; American, son of a bulldozer driver, forestry college educated, millionaire.

The two men had spoken on the telephone briefly a few days earlier, discussing their prospective attitudes towards the lottery, which both were hiding to run.

At 1pm Mr Snowden was ushered into the drawing room in the house which also serves as Mr Branson's office. He waited for a few minutes before being introduced to Mr Branson and to John Jackson, the former chief executive of Body Shop who was helping Mr Branson to put together his lottery bid.

Lunch was in the conservatory. As the three men sat among the carefully tended plants, he talk wandered over the issues — Mr Branson arguing that all lottery profits should go to charity. Mr Snowden countering that such an important business should be left to the companies with the greatest expertise.

Those companies, he explained, had shareholders who were motivated by one thing — profits.

Both men asked if the other might be willing to join their respective bids. No, was the short answer.

And that, but for the 90-



Guy Snowden, with his wife Diane, faces the media outside the High Court after losing his libel case against Richard Branson. PHOTOGRAPH BY NEIL MUMFIS

second conversation that followed, might have been the end of it. As Mr Snowden battled with his chocolate mousse, he decided to go for broke.

"I don't know how to phrase this, Richard," he said. "There is always a bottom line. I'll get to the point. In what way can we help you, Richard?"

Mr Snowden was sweating and dabbing his forehead with a handkerchief. There was a pause, maybe his message was not getting through.

"I mean, what can we do for you personally?"

"What on earth do you mean?" Mr Branson said. "Everybody needs something," came the reply.

And that was it. Guy Snowden had tried to bribe Richard Branson to withdraw from the bidding to run the lottery. Mr Jackson admitted that he nearly fell off his chair.

Fast-forward two years and three months. December 1996 and Mr Snowden is sitting with some of his closest advisers in his offices watching

Panorama. There was Mr Branson explaining to the world just what had happened during that lunch. They tried to bribe me, he said.

G-Tech's publicity machine went into overdrive. David Rendine, the company's director of public relations, told anybody that was willing to listen that the allegations were "outrageous" and "com-

pletely untrue". Why on earth would Mr Snowden try to bribe Mr Branson, he argued.

He posed no threat to the G-Tech bid, and Mr Snowden had absolutely no reason to offer him money, he argued. And no, Mr Snowden had never heard of the bribery allegations.

Mr Branson's response was simple enough: If I'm wrong,

sue me. If you're calling me a liar, I'll sue you.

Mr Snowden had to take the bait or risk seeing his reputation disappear as fast as spring snow. So both men took action, a court fight of Gollath v. Gollath.

Mr Snowden had two problems. First, Mr Branson had written a note of the conversation in a notepad on the day of the lunch. Second, a number of memos revealed just how seriously Camelot was taking the Branson bid.

The first memo arrived on Mr Snowden's desk on March 2, 1994, six months after the lunch. Tim Holley, chief executive of Camelot, and David Rigg, director of communications, also received a copy.

It was from Charles Cousins, an employee of G-Tech who made up part of the bid team. It referred to a meeting between Mr Cousins and Colin Moynihan, the former Conservative MP who was hired as a £60,000-a-year consultant by G-Tech to oil the wheels of access between the company, the Government and Peter Davis. Another for-

mer Conservative MP, John Maples, was similarly employed.

"Colin Moynihan believes that HMG [Her Majesty's Government] will not support the Branson bid, though he agrees that we must find an elegant way to get the Director General off the political hook," the memo said.

The inference was clear. Al-

though the Government did not want to see Mr Branson win, Camelot was worried that it would be difficult for the public to explain to the public why the Branson bid, with all the profits going to charity, had failed.

Another memo between Mr Rigg and Mr Holley discussed rumours of a bribery allegation involving G-Tech and Mr

Branson. A third, again from Mr Rigg, detailed Mr Branson's bid and how Camelot should respond to the charity v. profit debate.

Odd, it seemed, for a company that had "no fear" of what the man from Virgin was doing.

Immediately after Camelot won the bidding process, Sir Ron Dearing, the then chairman of the company, had a meeting with Mr Davis at which the Oflot director admitted that he had "real concerns" about G-Tech. Odd, it was suggested in court, for a company that was supposedly fit and proper to participate in running Camelot.

Now Camelot, Mr Davis and the Government have been left to sift over the ashes of this now most public of business dirty dealings.

Mr Snowden has already lost. Others may follow.

© CORRECTION: We have been asked to make it clear that contrary to our report on Page 9, January 26, Mr Guy Snowden receives no salary from his non-executive directorship of Camelot.

David Hencke

Snowden: Saw gap in the market

IN the 1970s, Guy Snowden set up a consultancy firm with a friend, Victor Markowicz, to advise state lotteries on how best to run their businesses.

It quickly became apparent to Snowden that there was no single company in the business of actually running lotteries. So he set one up and called it G-Tech.

After winning the bid to run the state lottery in Rhode Island and Connecticut, the company went from strength to strength and now runs more than 70 lotteries around the world.

It makes more than \$500 million a year and has 3,200 employees. Snowden, aged 52, has seen his salary, bonuses and share options rise from the equivalent of £1.2 million in 1993 to £2.3 million last year. The company also has a share of Camelot's £70 million-plus annual profits.

There have been rumblings of discontent. Allegations of bid-rigging and dirty tricks have dogged the company during a number of bitter battles to run new lotteries. Four FBI investigations have looked at claims that bribes were offered to officials in California, Kentucky and New Jersey.

None has ever gone high enough to implicate Snowden.

Kamal Ahmed

Davis: 'Errors of judgment'

PETER Davis, 58, rose from being auditor at accountants Price Waterhouse to deputy chairman of the National Lottery building society.

He was appointed National Lottery regulator because he was regarded as a safe pair of hands. He soon found himself subject to tough questioning from the National Audit Office and the Commons public accounts committee.

"They became unimpressed with his role as regulator. He was accused of being 'unwise' and making 'serious errors of judgment' in his relationship with G-Tech after he accepted seven free flights on its jets and helicopters while in the US."

He also disapproved of him staying with Carl Menzies, head of a New York investment house with a 25 per cent stake in G-Tech. The two men's wives were friends.

After Branson made his allegations, an inquiry commissioned by Davis cleared Snowden of any suggestion that he was involved and gave evidence on Snowden's behalf in the libel case.

He survived pressure to resign in 1996 but Virginia Bottomley, then heritage secretary, warned him to be more careful about accepting trips.

David Hencke

Wounded soldier sues MoD

Clare Dyer on the compensation battle by a UN peacekeeper who lost a leg serving in Bosnia

A BRITISH soldier who lost a leg after a Serb tank fired into his barracks will today launch a High Court challenge to the Ministry of Defence's refusal to pay him compensation.

In May 1995, Sgt Trevor Walker, then a corporal, had been in Bosnia 15 days when the shell hit his accommodation block. He was with a unit of Royal Engineers assigned to help United Nations peacekeeping forces build a road for use by humanitarian vehicles.

If his challenge succeeds, it could force the services to pay compensation for death or injury in a much wider range of cases than at present. The ministry's Criminal Injuries Compensation Overseas Scheme will compensate soldiers injured through crimes of violence abroad, but not when involved in "war or warlike activities".

When Sgt Walker applied for compensation under the scheme, his commanding officer referred to him as "a soldier of almost unlimited potential to achieve high rank

and a full career... He has borne his pain with enormous fortitude and has been an example to us all."

But he was told that the scheme excluded injuries "as a result of war operations or military activity by warring factions". The MoD is refusing to pay even though the UN has confirmed it would reimburse Britain for any sums paid out for injuries on UN peacekeeping service.

Sgt Walker, aged 32, had 13 operations but his right leg had to be amputated above the knee. He also had serious injuries to his left leg. He now wears an artificial limb and works as a storeman at the Royal School of Military Engineering near Gillingham, Kent, where he lives with his wife, Debbie, and two children.

"It's drastically affected my life," he said. "Frustration is a big part of it, not being able to do what I could. And there's uncertainty about the future. My promotion prospects have been hampered. The army have said I can finish my 22 years — I've served 14 — but I don't know if my injuries will allow me to. Job prospects after the army are much more limited."

The British Legion is financing his case because his army pay puts him outside the scope of legal aid. Some 26 British service personnel have been killed in Bosnia, and about 30 seriously injured.

Sgt Walker's lawyers will argue that when the scheme was set up in 1980, explanatory material showed that the

war exception was meant to exclude only injuries resulting from acts "committed by an enemy where a state of war or a warlike situation is declared to exist".

They say this clearly was intended to cover situations where soldiers were engaged in fighting an enemy of Britain, and not in peacekeeping. But service personnel were never told that the MoD was now adopting a broader interpretation, covering any state of war, and that they would not be compensated if they were injured in peacekeeping duties.

Soldiers serving in Northern Ireland are considered to be assisting the Royal Ulster Constabulary in fighting terrorism, and not engaged in war. Therefore any injuries

they suffer are considered to result from criminal acts, allowing them to claim under the same criminal injuries compensation scheme which applies to civilians.

Sgt Walker said he had been told his injury would have been worth up to £150,000 under the criminal injuries scheme.

His lawyers will argue that the deliberate attack on a UN peacekeeping unit was not a military activity, but a crime under international law.

An MoD spokesman said Sgt Walker's case was "extremely sad". He added: "As far as compensation is concerned, soldiers are very much aware there is a difference between getting injured in Northern Ireland and getting injured elsewhere."

'Bankrupt' orchestra faces closure, accountants warn

Dan Gishler Arts Correspondent

MANCHESTER'S 140-year-old Hallé Orchestra is effectively bankrupt and faces closure unless financial controls are put in place and a rescue package can be put together, its board can be told tomorrow.

The orchestra, which operates under the name the Hallé Concert Society, has an accumulated deficit of £500,000 and a trading loss this year of £500,000.

Its accountants, KPMG, concludes that a "well run" orchestra should lose only £200,000 and that the Hallé

has reached its overdraft limit.

The downturn in the orchestra's finances comes despite a leap of a third in audience figures following its move to the £42 million Bridgewater Hall at the end of 1996.

The Hallé chairman, John East, said yesterday: "I have made no secret of the fact that the Hallé has financial problems. Can you tell me of any other major arts organisation in the country that is not strapped for money?"

The entire orchestra sector is facing financial problems, with orchestras in Birmingham, London, Liverpool and Bournemouth all under un-

precedented financial pressure. Some observers argue that there are simply too many orchestras, and the Hallé is thought to have fared badly in competition with the Manchester-based BBC Symphony Orchestra.

In a familiar refrain for arts organisations, the Hallé's problems are blamed on poor management and financial control. Insiders have blamed the orchestra's "archaic" structure and KPMG is understood to have condemned the management's "general lack of control" and failure to develop a strategy on which to base decisions.

Personality differences have also played a role. The chief executive, Alan Dean, left the Hallé last summer claiming he was frustrated at not being able to balance the books and has not been replaced although an appointment is expected in the next few days.

Until new financial controls are put in place, it is unlikely that any of the Hallé's current funders — including the Arts Council, Manchester city council and surrounding local authorities — will be prepared to put more money into the orchestra. Options which may be considered include a loan from the orchestra's Endowment Trust and a public appeal.

Bill Kerr, Manchester

hurch secretary of the Musicians' Union, which has 85 members in the Hallé, said: "The situation is the result of spectacularly poor management over the years."

Nicholas Payne, the director of the Royal Opera, one of the Royal Opera House's two resident companies, was yesterday appointed to run the English National Opera.

The move comes in the wake of a damning parliamentary report, the resignation of its chairman and board, and continuing financial problems.

Mr Payne was one of the few figures at the House to retain the confidence of the staff. He was also the mover

behind many of the Royal Opera's more adventurous productions.

Mr Payne replaces Dennis Marks as general director of ENO and will take up his post in the summer.

Mr Payne said yesterday: "ENO is a superb company, playing a unique role in the popularising of opera. I am honoured to be asked to lead the company during these challenging times."

His departure leaves the ROH facing the challenge of finding new creative leadership. The ROH will now be determined to hold on to conductor Bernard Haitink, one of Royal Opera's star attractions.

News in brief

Cervical smear re-screening

MORE than 100 women have been recalled for re-screening after a review of 317 cervical smears taken between 1993 and 1997 at Lincoln County hospital revealed 180 had been wrongly reported as normal by a consultant.

A total of 34 women have already received follow-up treatment, another 24, whose second check showed inadequate or mild abnormalities, have been invited for a repeat smear and 112 with moderate/severe abnormalities that were initially missed have been recalled for further examination.

A spokeswoman for the hospital said: "A moderate or severe cell change doesn't necessarily mean that a woman has cancer. However, a proportion of these women may have cancer. Women must attend for screening. It is women who don't come for screening regularly that get the really nasty cancers."

Race fixing arrest

A 34-YEAR-OLD man yesterday became the sixth suspect to be arrested in connection with police inquiries into alleged horse-doping and race fixing.

National Hunt jockeys Jamie Osborne, Dean Gallagher and Leighton Aspell have already been arrested over the alleged doping of the Aspell-ridden Lively Knight and Osborne-partnered Avanti Express at Plumpton and Exeter last March.

Life for sex attack man

A 21-YEAR-OLD man described in court as a "quiet, respectful and courteous young person" was given two life sentences and jail terms totalling 69 years at the Old Bailey yesterday for a fortnight spell of sex attacks and burglaries on women.

Dennis Kellerman, of Brixton, south London, admitted 14 charges variously alleging burglary with intent to rape, wounding, attempted rape, indecent assaults, false imprisonment, burglary and actual bodily harm in July and August 1996. The court heard that two sisters were left devastated after he broke into their home in the night, forcing them to have oral sex with him. — Jamie Wilson

Private estate walk guides

COUNTRY landowners are to produce county by county guides of walks, riding, climbing and boating opportunities on their private estates in a bid to fight off the Government's right-to-roam legislation.

The Country Landowners Association believes it will give the public a better deal than a general right to roam which will only give access to open land, mountains, moorland and common, but no extra rights on farmland. — Paul Brown

Reactor shutdown 'risky'

Paul Webster in Paris

THE French government's decision yesterday to dismantle the 56 billion Superphénix fast-breeder power plant at Creys-Malville, near the Swiss border, could lead to one of the most dangerous nuclear projects of the century.

The closure of the 1,240 megawatt reactor, which has produced only six months of electricity in 12 years of operation, is considered potentially more dangerous than

its construction because no plan was drawn up to take it out of service.

The Green movement had demanded the plant's dismantling as a condition of its joining the leftwing government coalition in June. But the Greens' leader and environment minister, Dominique Voynet, said she was shocked to discover that no contingency programme existed to shut down a reactor containing five tonnes of plutonium and 5,000 tonnes of volatile radioactive liquid sodium.

The Superphénix, which was intended to produce more

fuel than it consumed, will cost an estimated \$3 billion and take at least 10 years to dismantle.

British, American and Russian scientists, who have been involved in running down much smaller fast-breeder plants, will be asked for advice.

While officials from the French state electricity service (EDF) claim important lessons have been learnt from the power plant, Superphénix is widely seen as the worst engineering setback that France has suffered this century.

Hurriedly designed during the 1970s oil crisis, the plant suffered repeated breakdowns and was rarely connected to the national grid for more than a few weeks at a time.

The flagship turned white elephant fast breeder was also at the centre of continual political and social conflict, which looks likely to continue during the running-down period.

The plant has been dormant since December 1996, but staff want it to be restarted so as to burn off radioactive fuel. Ms Voynet has warned that she will oppose even a temporary operation as well as proposals to use the site for storing radioactive material or for underground nuclear laboratories.

But there is also concern locally for the loss of 2,000 jobs at the plant and thousands of others linked to ancillary services.

A government adviser on the closure, Jean-Pierre Anbert, told a ministerial meeting yesterday that a special programme was needed to ensure replacement work and local villages and towns needed compensation for the huge debts they had incurred

for new infrastructure projects linked to the nuclear site.

France's huge nuclear power industry generates 80 per cent of the country's electricity and is a powerful lobby. While some local groups fight the presence of nuclear facilities, others battle for them as a source of employment.

France must "convert the site to maintain the jobs and to respond to worries in communities that families will leave," Ms Voynet told France 2 television on Sunday.



British balloonist Andy Elson (left) repairs Orbiter's rear hatch yesterday, while the flight director, Alan Noble (above), maps their course at the Geneva control centre

Final appeal to fly over China

THREE European balloonists attempting to make the first non-stop flight around the world were waiting anxiously last night for the outcome of a final appeal to China to allow them to cross its territory.

As the Breitling Orbiter-2 crew headed over Pakistan from Iran, officials at its Geneva airport control centre said China's refusal would be a blow to their record attempt, in its sixth day.

"We are trying to get China's permission through all possible channels," said a spokesman for the flight, which was given a friendly welcome by Baghdad when

winds blew the balloon unexpectedly into Iraqi airspace. "We are still hoping for good news."

Bertrand Piccard, a Swiss psychiatrist, Wim Verstraeten, a Belgian pilot, and Andy Elson, a British engineer, lifted off in the Orbiter last Wednesday from the Swiss Alps on its 15,000-mile journey.

After flying over Islamabad, the crew will set course for Lahore where, if they receive the green light from China, they will rise to more than 21,000ft to catch eastward jet-stream winds, carrying them over the Pacific and on to California. — AP.

Hammer falls on dictator kitsch

Jane Perlez in Bucharest

ROMANIA is planning a jumble sale of bric-a-brac hoarded by its late Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena.

"Most of it is pure kitsch," said Nicolae Petrescu, deputy director of the Museum of History in Bucharest, as he inspected storage rooms stuffed with gifts given to the Ceausescus by Communist Party groups and foreign dignitaries.

Power play in Romania

PARTIES in Romania's fractured government jockeyed for position yesterday to end a month of turmoil and keep the centrist coalition afloat in parliament.

President Emil Constantinescu apologised for his remarks on Sunday expressing disgust at the disputes and accusing parties of violating an agreement he brokered last week.

He said his comments had been "ill-considered" and urged the government, weakened by a walkout by its second-largest party, to patch together a majority in parliament to enact overdue market reforms.

"Romania will sustain major damage unless there is agreement to end the crisis, give parliamentary support to the government and end all disputes," he said. — Reuters.

nities. "Does someone want to drink out of the tea-and-coffee set Brezhnev gave Ceausescu?"

Ceausescu displayed the gifts in glass cases in the museum. Schoolchildren learning about the popularity of the unpopular president were taken on field trips to inspect them.

Soon after the Ceausescus were overthrown and executed in 1989, the museum dismantled the display. Now, short of funds and tired of hoarding largely useless objects, it is organising an auction.

"It was all dumped on us

from the very beginning of his rule," said Mr Petrescu, who was part of the retinue when Ceausescu visited the museum to inspect his goods. "But most of the gifts he received from abroad were selected by him and his wife and kept in the palace."

He said the whereabouts of those more valuable gifts, including a French tapestry, were unknown.

Ceausescu, who ruled Romania from 1965, was one of the most repressive Communist dictators in eastern Europe, but because he was on unfriendly terms with the Soviet Union, the United States and other Western countries maintained fairly cordial relations with him.

The gifts gave some indication of this: models of mooncraft from NASA; a key from the city of New York; a 10-gallon hat from Texas. The French government was more generous: blue and gold Sevres urns with portraits of the couple painted on the sides.

And the Soviets were not exactly stingy. Leonid Brezhnev's red and white tea and coffee service has nearly 100 pieces.

Governments from Africa to Asia gave the Ceausescus honorary degrees, complete with academic gowns.

But most of the pieces were ordered up by the Communist Party and fashioned by factory workers, who tolled over them for hours in preparation for a visit from the "beloved leader". A woodworker's plant built a headboard with an inlaid design showing a youthful-looking president with a full head of hair and a cherubic smile.

Among the other bargains are imitation Tiffany glass vases, a pair of porcelain birds presented by the Rolls-Royce plant in England, sandals from Morocco, busts of the Ceausescus, fine porcelain and cheap crockery, and handbags and briefcases.

Mr Petrescu said the museum is preparing an inventory but has not fixed a date for the auction. It was also far from clear who might buy the stuff.

But for history's sake, the museum will hold on to several Ceausescu statues. They will serve as a reminder, he said, of the cult of personality. — New York Times.

Belgian paedophile report puts blame on 'incompetent' police

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE Belgian paedophile ring uncovered 18 months ago escaped detection for so long because of endemic police incompetence, a parliamentary report says.

The report, leaked to the Belgian news agency before its official presentation to parliament next week, scathingly widens the net, saying that the gang, led by Marc Dutroux, a hulk from Charleroi, must have had backing from political or police contacts.

The report blames low-level corruption and the chaotic police investigation for the time taken to uncover and break up the gang.

The finding was criticised by Gino Russo, whose eight-year-old daughter Melissa was kidnapped in 1995 and left to starve to death in a cellar at Dutroux's house. The bodies of Melissa and her best friend, Julie Lejeune, also aged eight, were found buried in Dutroux's garden in August 1996.

Mr Russo said: "I don't be-

lieve the report's conclusions... If [the gang] didn't have protection that makes it 100 times worse." The leak had been orchestrated to prepare Belgians for its findings before publication — also to protect those in authority, he claimed.

The parliamentary inquiry had been set up to investigate

whether the paedophiles had received high-level protection of that, but it repeats criticisms of the police search for Julie and Melissa made in a parliamentary report last year, for which it blames low-level officers.

At the time of the kidnappings, officers had Dutroux's house under surveillance and searched it three times while the girls were still alive. During one search, officers heard children's voices but did not investigate further.

Police received tip-offs about the activities of Dutroux, a convicted sex offender, two years before the girls were kidnapped, but did nothing. Rival police forces refused to share information and, at least once, tried to mislead colleagues.

No incompetent was the investigation that many Bel-

gians, shocked by the corruption of the system and familiar with the discreetly informal workings of the establishment, were convinced that Dutroux, who is awaiting trial, must have been protected.

Such suspicions were fuelled by the arrests of Dutroux's associate, Michel Nihoul, a Brussels estate agent and political fixer, and Georges Zicot, the head of the Charleroi traffic police, who was suspected of ignoring Dutroux's car thefts.

Zicot and René Michaux, who headed the police surveillance operation in Charleroi, are condemned in the report. It says Mr Michaux ignored almost all the rules for a professional police inquiry when handling the investigation.

Mr Zicot said yesterday: "I've got nothing to reproach myself for... they can't prove anything against me."

No one of the officers involved has been disciplined. Some have been promoted.

The Belgian newspaper Le Soir said last night: "It is serious and insufferable. And perhaps it is even more pernicious that Dutroux did not have protection by an identified personality."

"That would have been a cyst which could have been cut out fairly easily, but this is a cancer which has to be treated carefully and who knows whether the illness is malignant and perhaps incurable?"

Eurocrat parents lobby against jail-side school

Stephen Bates in Brussels

EVEN in a city as used to demonstrations as Brussels, the protest by Eurocrats and their spouses outside the Centre Borschette conference building was unprecedented.

The sight of 300 affluent protesters chanting, waving placards and handing out leaflets last week was so unnerving that police were summoned.

But even stranger was the subject of the demonstration: a protest over a dilapidated school causing tension between the Belgian government and potentially one of the most influential lobbying groups in Brussels — the families of Eurocrats and diplomats whose children attend the European School, set up to

teach the offspring of European Union officials.

They were lobbying the school's governing body over Belgian government plans to move some of the children from the school at a chateau in the suburb of Uccle to a new site in a narrow inner-city side street next to Brussels' three prisons.

The school was built for 1,900 pupils but has more than 3,400, aged from four to 18. Overcrowding has been made worse by the discovery of asbestos cladding in several of the 1960s classroom blocks; half the school may have to close for building work for up to five years.

At the heart of the row is the Belgian authorities' reluctance to spend extra money on the school when they are slashing public spending, including on their

own schools, to try to qualify for the single currency.

The Belgian authorities have modified their plan by saying they no longer intend to open a paedophile rehabilitation unit next door. Georges Vlandas, president of the parents' association, said: "The site isn't appropriate for educational purposes because of the physical and psychological risks to the children."

The plan has aroused almost total opposition among parents and angry confrontations between the association and the school, which has accepted the plans.

One British parent said: "We know the reputation of Belgium so far as criminals and sex offenders is concerned and to have them roaming the street where our children are going to school is asking for trouble."

World news in brief

Sri Lankan battle toll approaches 400

SRI LANKAN planes bombed Tamil Tiger rebel hideouts yesterday as troops cleared the northern Kilinochchi district where almost 400 combatants have died in the first big battle in more than a month, officials and state radio said.

They said 14 soldiers died overnight and troops had intercepted rebel radio messages indicating that the guerrillas had suffered 350 casualties. This raised the combined death toll from the weekend battle to 384.

The battle came just days before celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of independence. — Reuters, Colombo.

Indonesians riot over prices

SOCIAL unrest in Indonesia escalated further yesterday as thousands rioted on the islands of Java and Sulawesi amid rumours of rising fuel and food prices.

Riot police fired warning shots to disperse 300 youths in the south Sulawesi city of Ujungpandang. The youths were looting shops thought to be overcharging for basics. In Pasturian, eastern Java, 20 people were arrested after hundreds attacked a shop and shops during a demonstration against a 250 per cent kerosene price hike. — John Aglionby, Jakarta.

Murder silence broken

THE French film producer and husband of Sophie Toscan du Plantier, whose murder in County Cork more than a year ago has still not been solved, has spoken for the first time since the killing and accused Irish police of mishandling the investigation.

Daniel Toscan du Plantier told the French daily Le Figaro that police had been "completely unable" to make a case against the only man they suspected. Mrs Toscan du Plantier was found battered to death on December 23 1996 in a lane near her holiday home in West Cork. — Jon Henley, Paris.

New president for Costa Rica

COSTA RICAN voters upset by high prices and inflation have chosen a conservative economist as their next president. Weighing the red and blue of the opposition Social Christian Unity Party, joyous revelers yesterday screamed the name of Miguel Angel Rodríguez.

With 59 per cent of the ballot boxes counted, he had 46.8 per cent of the vote, compared with 44.8 per cent for José Miguel Corrales of the National Liberation Party. Mr Corrales conceded defeat soon after the first results were announced. — AP, San José.

Russians fear syphilis spread

SYPHILIS cases in Russia have spread to near-epidemic scale, officials said yesterday. Some 392,000 Russians were infected last year — a 4.4 per cent increase on 1996, said Gennady Onishchenko, Russia's first deputy health minister.

The number of cases among under-14s soared by 31 per cent, he said. In most cases, children contracted the disease from their mothers. — AP, Moscow.

Philippines flight missing

A DOMESTIC Philippines commercial DC-9 plane with an unknown number of people on board last night failed to arrive at its destination in southern Mindanao and a search was under way, airport sources said. The Cebu Pacific domestic aircraft took off from Manila. — Reuters, Manila.

Groundhog's chilling forecast



Punxsutawney Phil, the world's most famous groundhog, tells Bill Cooper, president of the Inner Circle of Punxsutawney's Groundhog Club, yesterday to expect more ice and snow. Legend has it that winter will last six more weeks if the groundhog sees his shadow in the morning on Groundhog Day, which he apparently did. The prediction prompted boos from a Pennsylvania crowd that had been whooping it up for much of the night. PHOTOGRAPH BY JASON COHEN

Algerian rounds on Morocco

THE former Algerian defence minister Khaled Nezzar, who still wields huge influence, said in remarks published yesterday that the border with Morocco was like a sieve through which guns were smuggled to Algerian guerrillas.

General Nezzar, in a signed commentary in El Watan newspaper, also denounced propaganda against Algeria which he said was being carried on a Moroccan radio station.

Relations between Morocco and Algeria have long been strained over a dispute in the Western Sahara, which is claimed by Morocco. Their land border has been closed since 1994.

Meanwhile, Algerian security forces at the weekend killed 60 rebels south of the capital Algiers, and 13 civilians, including a six-month-old baby who had his head smashed against a wall, were murdered in other parts of the country, Algerian newspapers reported. — Reuters, Paris.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON THE VOTING SYSTEM

The Independent Commission on the Voting System, chaired by Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, is seeking views on alternatives to the current "first-past-the-post" system of elections to the House of Commons.

The Commission would welcome reasoned submissions in writing from any person or organisation interested in the subject.

The Commission's terms of reference are:-

"The Commission will be free to consider and recommend any appropriate system or combination of systems in recommending an alternative to the present system for Parliamentary elections to be put before the people in the Government's referendum."

The Commission shall observe the requirement for broad proportionality, the need for stable government, an extension of voter choice and the maintenance of a link between MPs and geographical constituencies."

Written submissions should be brief, and sent soon (before the end of February, if at all possible) to the Independent Commission on the Voting System at

6th Floor, Clive House, Petty France, LONDON SW1H 9HD or e-mailed to: votingcom@holis.demon.co.uk

24/11/98

Shed for sale, one bomb builder owner: apply to county jail



Workers unload the Unabomber's one-room shack on its arrival in California after the long journey from the forests of Montana. Theodore Kaczynski's residence in it, without electricity or running water, was to have been used as evidence of his supposedly disturbed mental state, but his plea bargain meant no trial took place

PHOTOGRAPH: RICH PEDRONCELLI

Mark Gladstone in Sacramento

A MONTH ago Theodore Kaczynski's grimy, one-room wood cabin was set to be a critical piece of evidence in the high-profile Unabomber trial.

Now Kaczynski has pleaded guilty to murder and other charges and will spend the rest of his life in

prison, never returning to the quiet woods of Montana where he built his shack.

So what to do with his tiny home, whose 1,100-mile journey from the Rockies was chronicled by television news crews as it travelled on the back of a truck to Sacramento, where the trial was being held?

Might the cabin — where Kaczynski is said to have

built his bombs — be sold to offset court costs, or to provide funds to help bomb victims? Could it be sold and used as a tourist attraction?

"We still don't know. It's still up in the air," said Quin Denvir, Kaczynski's main defence lawyer. "It may not be decided until after the [formal] sentencing," which is scheduled for May 15.

Mr Denvir said there might be potential buyers for the cabin. But, he explained, even though his client owns the shack, "in the end, it will probably be up to the court... It can't be disposed of without an order of the court."

Until Kaczynski's plea bargain last month, his lawyers had planned to use the cabin as evidence of the former mathematician's

troubled mind. What sort of man would live for 20 years in a cramped shack without electricity or running water?

"In our view, the cabin symbolises what had happened to this professor and how he had come to live," Mr Denvir said in December after the cabin arrived in Sacramento. "When people think about this case, they think about the cabin."

But a jury will never hear those points. On January 22, after weeks of legal wrangling, Kaczynski, aged 55, accepted a plea bargain and prosecutors agreed to drop plans to execute him for being the anti-technology Unabomber.

Kaczynski pleaded guilty to charges related to bombings in which three men were killed and two others

seriously injured. He took responsibility for 11 more bombings that injured 29 people in an 18-year campaign of terrorism.

Prosecutors said Kaczynski spent hours in his cabin writing his manifesto, as well as crafting intricate bombs which he posted to his victims. When Kaczynski was arrested in April 1996 at his shack, the FBI found a completed

bomb inside ready for dispatch. Pending an evaluation by probation officials, Kaczynski remains in Sacramento county jail.

Leesa Brown, a spokeswoman for the prosecutors, said the government has no say over the cabin. However, she noted that victims or their families might have a claim to any profits from a sale. — Los Angeles Times

Casino strikers' gamble pays off

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

STRIKERS in Las Vegas have won a \$2.5 million settlement against the Frontier hotel and casino, after walking out in a union dispute more than six years ago.

Chambermaids, porters and kitchen staff have since picked the casino continuously, seeking recognition for their union and higher pay. They will share the settlement for back wages and benefits, half

of which will come from the new owner, the hotelier Philip Ruffin, and the rest from the former owner Margaret Elardi. In September 1991, 550 members of the Culinary Union stopped work after the management refused to match contracts offered by most other casino-hotels in the gambling capital in the Nevada desert. Of those still striking, 280 will return to their jobs and 100 will be laid off with benefits.

"It's been a long, hard fight, but worth every minute of it because we made it together,"

said Kathleen Hahn, with tears in her eyes, as she watched workmen erecting a banner over the hotel that read: "Everybody Welcome. Strike's Over." She said: "We only expected it to last a few weeks at the most."

Las Vegas is one of the most unionised cities in the United States, and the Frontier stoppage turned into a last stand by those who oppose organised labour in the booming tourist business. The Culinary Union has more than 40,000 members, and last year it won a three-year strike

against the MGM Grand, one of the biggest casinos.

Chambermaids often own their own homes and send their well-dressed children to school on a full stomach — something few workers in the notoriously ill-paid US catering and hotel business can do. Waitresses make \$12 an hour before tips in Las Vegas, double the money in most cities.

The longest recorded strike in the US was an auto-workers' stoppage in Wisconsin that lasted from April 1954 to October 1962.

Men in black track white lightning

Tom Verde in Rocky Mount, Virginia

CRUCHED in a thick, Jay Calhoun, a special agent of the Virginia Liquor taskforce, waited for the haying watchdogs to lose interest.

He called out to his two colleagues. "Let's go, the gig's up," and they headed for a corrugated-steel building, a "still house"

less than 50 yards away through the trees. They suspected moonshine was being made there and arrived just in time to block the escape of two suspects, who looked on as the agents used axes to break up the four 800-gallon stills.

Moonshining, which endures in many Southern rural towns, is not as widespread as it was during Prohibition. But authorities

say the illegal manufacture and sale of whisky remains a multimillion-dollar business, with ties to gun trafficking and drugs, and established markets as far north as New York.

Jimmy Beheler, assistant special agent in charge of the liquor taskforce, the only squad dedicated to combating moonshiners, estimates that 500,000 gallons of moonshine are distilled in Virginia each year,

much of it in Franklin county, the "moonshine capital of the South". With a street value of about \$25 (\$15.50) a gallon, moonshine in Virginia is a \$12.5 million industry.

"There's still a big demand out there for it, or else moonshiners wouldn't be making hundreds of gallons a week," said Randy Knight, an alcohol law enforcement official. — New York Times

Clinton backers deflect scrutiny to Starr's role

Martin Kettle in Washington

A FORTNIGHT after allegations of an affair whipped up a storm that seemed to threaten Bill Clinton's presidency, the clouds are gathering over his tormenter-in-chief, the independent counsel Kenneth Starr.

With public opinion hardening against his role in the crisis, Mr Starr and his office are increasingly seen as the problem rather than the solution. Calls for reform of the independent counsel system are growing louder.

He made a rare public comment yesterday on investigations into whether Mr Clinton pressured Monica Lewinsky to lie about the alleged affair. He told CNN: "We're moving with good speed."

His office was "trying to assemble the facts and get to the truth as quickly as we can". However, with negotiations with Mr Lewinsky's lawyers seemingly stalled, Mr Starr is finding it increasingly hard to overcome the public percep-

tion that he has spent \$30 million (\$18 million) of public money pursuing a frequently petty series of politically motivated vendettas against the most important leader in the world. An opinion poll in the latest issue of Time magazine finds that a majority of almost two to one thinks he has gone too far.

Mr Clinton's most partisan

Barry McCaffrey — for making phone calls attacking the former Pentagon official Linda Tripp, one of Mr Starr's key witnesses.

After 40 minutes before the Washington grand jury, Mr Weiner emerged to complain: "I believe we have experienced the witch hunt and parsimony that the American people resent about this case."

Democrats have begun to focus on the need for reform of the independent counsel system, and many experts back them.

Cass Sunstein, a law professor at the University of Chicago and a Clinton sympathiser, said yesterday that it was time to reform the office. "The problem is that this is one person focusing on one other person and often on just one event. That narrowness is inimical both to justice and to the public good."

The New York Times columnist Anthony Lewis wrote yesterday: "The independent counsel statute has given us a creature outside the constitutional system."

A Senate committee had already planned to hold hearings this summer on the future of the independent counsel law, which, unless renewed by Congress, expires next year. Although Republicans have criticised the law in the past, its future probably depends on whether the Democrats regain control of Congress in this year's mid-term elections.

He is finding it hard to overcome the public perception that he spent \$30 million pursuing vendettas

supporters see Mr Starr as a conservative activist given free rein to seize on any and every allegation and use it against the president, placing him at the centre of the "vast, right-wing conspiracy" about which Hillary Clinton complained last week.

These claims seemed to gain credence last week when Mr Starr subpoenaed Robert Weiner, press spokesman for the drugs "czar" General

US puts Turkey under pressure

Washington seeks unconditional support in its battle with Iraq, writes Chris Morris in Ankara

A HIGH-LEVEL United States delegation attempted to drum up support in Ankara yesterday for Washington's campaign to force Iraq to co-operate with the United Nations.

The vice-chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff, General Joseph Ralston, said there had been no formal request to use Incirlik air base in southern Turkey if military action against Iraq goes ahead.

The delegates were sounding out opinion from their Turkish counterparts at yesterday's talks — and hoping for a positive response. US and British planes are already stationed at Incirlik, ready to be deployed to the Mediterranean coast. The base is the headquarters of Operation Northern Watch, which patrols Kurdish areas of northern Iraq. A UN no-fly zone prevents the Iraqi air force from operating in the region.

Turkey shares concern about Iraq's potential to develop weapons of mass destruction, but has made it clear that it thinks a diplomatic option should be explored before any decision on military action is made. The Turkish foreign minis-

ter, Ismail Cem, said he would travel to Iraq this weekend to join mediators from other countries. Although one of Washington's closest allies in the region, Turkey has kept diplomatic channels with Baghdad open.

The US delegation appeared to dampen Mr Cem's efforts with faint praise. If mediation "can produce a result, we would welcome that", said Marc Grossman, the assistant secretary of state for Europe. "But I must say that we are sceptical given the past Iraqi behaviour."

The US recognises that Turkey is in a sensitive position, and that following a US line on this issue is not always politically popular. Turkey was an important part of the coalition against Iraq during the Gulf war in 1991, but it has lost billions of pounds in trade revenue because of UN sanctions against Baghdad.

One of the parties which forms the Turkish government, led by the deputy prime minister, Bulent Ecevit, is strongly opposed to any co-operation with a US military campaign. Mr Ecevit has said publicly that the use of Incirlik is out of the question.

"We are trying to persuade the US to be patient," he said yesterday. "Unless diplomacy is exhausted, a military operation will be dangerous and Turkey will suffer the consequences."

The prime minister, Mesut Yilmaz, has not yet made such a definitive statement. Like many senior military leaders, he is cautious about upsetting the US on such an important issue.

It is possible that the US will not ask for permission to use Incirlik. Defence analysts in Ankara point out that the US already has plenty of firepower on warships in the Gulf. The last time the US attacked Iraq, in September 1996, bombers flew from as far away as Guam, in the Pacific Ocean, to avoid using Turkish bases.

A possible compromise would be for Incirlik to be used as part of a support network, rather than as a base for bombing campaigns. But it remains an extremely delicate subject. As the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, is finding out the appetite for military action against Iraq is not what it was a few years ago.

Muge Young, page 5; Analysis, page 11

'Black gold' mocks blockade

In the race to get at Turkmenistan's riches, oil and gas firms are ignoring sanctions on Iran, reports James Meek in Ashkhabad

UNITED STATES efforts to enforce an international investment blockade of Iran face collapse as European and Asian energy companies, with British firms in the lead, rush to use the Gulf state as a route to move oil and natural gas from landlocked Central Asia.

The British-Dutch Shell group and the young British company Monument Oil are leading consortia to build pipelines from the former Soviet republic of Turkmenistan into Iran and the world market beyond, defying the threat of US sanctions.

The issue signifies a rift between the US and Europe and will be on the agenda when President Bill Clinton and Tony Blair meet this week.

Like most of the despotic former Soviet rulers of Central Asia and the Caucasus, Turkmenistan's president, Saparmurat Niyazov, has been courted and encouraged by the US in his attempts to reduce dependence on Russia.

But the Turkmenians, sitting on the world's fourth-largest reserves of natural gas, yet broke because they cannot sell it, say they have been cut off for decades from their southern neighbour Iran by the ideological whims of Moscow, and will not allow another superpower to resurrect the barriers.

Yolbez Kephonov, a senior Turkmen energy official in the

capital, Ashkhabad, said: "By all means let the US say straight out, 'Don't make friends with Iran.' But we can't do that, because we're a neutral country."

"In principle everyone has to be equal in our eyes but Iran has to come first. We've got 1,500km [900 miles] of common border. There are 2 million Turkmen in the north of Iran. We have to co-operate with them."

In Soviet times Turkmenistan fed the USSR's industrial heartlands with gas worth billions of pounds at world prices. It got little back.

Once the hub of the Silk Road between China and Persia, Turkmenistan was turned into an artificial dead end, its border with Iran one of the most tightly-sealed and heavily guarded folds of the Iron Curtain.

Political independence in 1991 did nothing to change dependence on Russia's pipeline network, which transports its

gas, at huge expense, to countries such as Ukraine that can't afford to pay for it.

Building new pipelines through Iran to solvent customers seemed like the perfect solution. But there was a major obstacle: the 1996 Iran-Libya Sanctions Act passed by the US Congress. It was designed to punish any firm investing more than \$20 million (\$12 million) in Iran.

"US policy is to oppose all pipelines across Iran," said one western source in Ashkhabad. "The Turkmenians know the light is red, but believe me. They know it by now."

Mr Niyazov is jumping the lights. In March he switched off the gas to Russia, and in December triumphantly joined Iran's President Mohammad Khatami in opening a new gas pipeline between the two neighbours.

The pipeline is small and will do little for the Turkmen economy. But it is the first ever energy export route from the former USSR to be outside Russia's control. That makes it a psychological breakthrough for the Turkmenians.

More is to come. Already concerned by last year's \$1.2 billion French-Russian-Malayalan deal to develop an Iranian gas field, the US is now watching Shell carry out a nine-month survey of a future 940-mile pipeline to carry Turkmen gas through Iran to Turkey.

Monument is studying a project for a pipeline to carry Turkmen oil into Iran.

"The American policy doesn't affect us directly," said a Monument executive in Ashkhabad. "What it does do is hinder the American oil



Workers in Ashkhabad.

PHOTOGRAPH: RUBEN MALGASARIAN

companies, which is to our advantage. I don't think it's sustainable."

For American oil firms in Turkmenistan, these are difficult times. In what may be far-sighted optimism or simple desperation, California's Unocal is leading a consortium to build a gas pipeline from Turk-

menistan to the Indian sub-continent through the war-ravaged chaos of Afghanistan.

"The US state department doesn't like the idea of him shipping gas down to Iran," said Scott Barber, head of Unocal's Ashkhabad office. "The bottom line is that he has to sell his gas."

Only one for the road

Lowering the drink limit by itself isn't enough

IS NO-ONE except the drinks industry going to challenge the call to lower the drink-drive limit? Ministers will be gratified by the response to yesterday's consultative document on drink-driving. They have made no secret of their wish to lower the current drink-driving limit of 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood down to 50mg — roughly, depending on an individual's metabolism, down from two-and-a-half pints of beer to a pint. For women it would be even lower. Police chiefs, the British Medical Association and even the Automobile Association backed the lowering of the limit yesterday. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents went one better urging the government to adopt a "none for the road" limit by the year 2000.

There are serious arguments why a lower limit might make sense. Ministers are right to resist becoming complacent in the face of the steep drop in drink-drive fatalities — down two-thirds in the last two decades. Even with this drop over 500 people are killed every year in accidents involving existing illegal alcohol levels — and to these victims have to be added another 15,000 people who suffer injuries, some of them hideous. Moreover drink-drive fatalities flattened out in 1993, remaining at an estimated 540 for the last four consecutive years. Worse still, research suggests the chance of a driver being involved in an accident doubles after a pint. Although current statistics do not include people with blood alcohol readings below 80mg, yesterday's document estimates about 80 road users are killed every year in accidents where one driver has a blood alcohol reading of between 50 and 80mg.

The current 80mg limit was adopted in a totally different age. Barbara Castle, the transport minister at the time, recognised there would be widespread public opposition to restrictions on

drink-driving in 1967 and deliberately chose a pragmatic limit. There has been a dramatic change in public attitudes since then. Surveys show the proportion claiming to leave their car at home when drinking has grown from 54 to 75 per cent — and the proportion claiming to arrange for someone else to drive has expanded from 46 to 68 per cent. A Guardian/ICM poll last month found overwhelming public support for lowering the limit to 50mg: 85 per cent approved (75 per cent "strongly") compared to just 13 per cent opposed.

With such arguments — and such professional and public backing — ministers might seem to have a watertight case. But it's not that simple. France has the lower level of 50mg but twice as many fatalities as the UK. Greece has a 50mg limit and three times the fatalities. Lowering the limit by itself will not make people drink less. Detection is the great deterrent, not the fear of losing your driving licence. One Home Office study suggested 250 people break the existing drink-drive limit for every one caught. Others have put the number at 1,000 to one. There is no discussion of these harsh facts in yesterday's document. Ministers are ready to widen police powers to stop suspect drivers — for example down the road from a pub with a notorious reputation for excessive drinking. That's the right approach. Making detection more certain will certainly reduce drink-driving. But what will happen to public opinion if this is tied to a new 50mg limit? Erosion of public support. Restricting the penalty of the lower limit to fines is an option but ministers were playing down this two-tier justice idea yesterday. Over half of all people currently convicted have a blood alcohol reading of over 150mg. Why not go for random breath tests first and see what happens? Retaining public support is crucial.

It's the economy, Cupid

Clinton delivers growth, low inflation and a surplus

FIVE years ago when Bill Clinton's budget package resulted in a cliff-hanging two-vote victory for the President, Newt Gingrich predicted that it would lead to a recession the following year for which he would hold each of the Democrats concerned responsible. Well, not only did the recession not happen then but it hasn't happened since. The US economy is now in its seventh successive year of recovery with barely a hint of inflation. Yesterday President Clinton proved that he can run the nation's affairs much more successfully than his own when he announced a budget for the next fiscal year sporting the first surplus for 30 years. For America this is a moment in history. President Reagan had been elected on a platform to eliminate the budget deficit but by the time the Republicans had been ousted from office in 1992, the Bush administration bequeathed a record \$250 billion deficit. It was left to the so-called free-spending Democrats to deliver the Republican's manifesto.

Cynics will say that Clinton was able to contain spending mainly because he was restrained by a hostile Congress and had to ditch, or at least postpone, many of his social reforms. On the monetary side he was lucky to have Federal Reserve head Alan Greenspan at the helm, whose deft restraint on interest rates and intuitive understanding of counter-inflationary forces in the economy, undoubtedly prolonged the recovery. But as with his personal

affairs, Clinton must be given the credit for making his own luck. Shortly before he came into office America was starting to be written off as a technological force even by its own business journals in favour of Japan. Now it all looks different. Japan is nursing its self-inflicted fiscal wounds while the US has seized what seems like an unassailable lead in the digital revolution and positively exudes technological self-confidence. It enters its seventh year of recovery with growth strong (3.7 per cent), unemployment (4.7 per cent) and inflation (1.7 per cent) remarkably low and with the pace of business investment resumed at what the normally reticent OECD describes as a "torrid" pace.

The President yesterday predicted a surplus of \$9.5 billion surplus in the fiscal year starting Oct 1 (three years ahead of schedule) and thereafter surpluses "as far as the eye can see". This didn't stop Republicans — cheekily — accusing him of embarking on a spending spree instead of cutting taxes. The President is prudently planning to put some of the surplus into a social security reserve to fund retirement for the baby boom generation while also earmarking revenue from higher corporate taxes and the levy on the tobacco industry for cutting class sizes and improving child care. Good for him. Meanwhile, as Tony Blair prepares for his US visit, he will have plenty of lessons to ponder. Particularly in the area of pre-electoral war chests.

Up from under the Crown

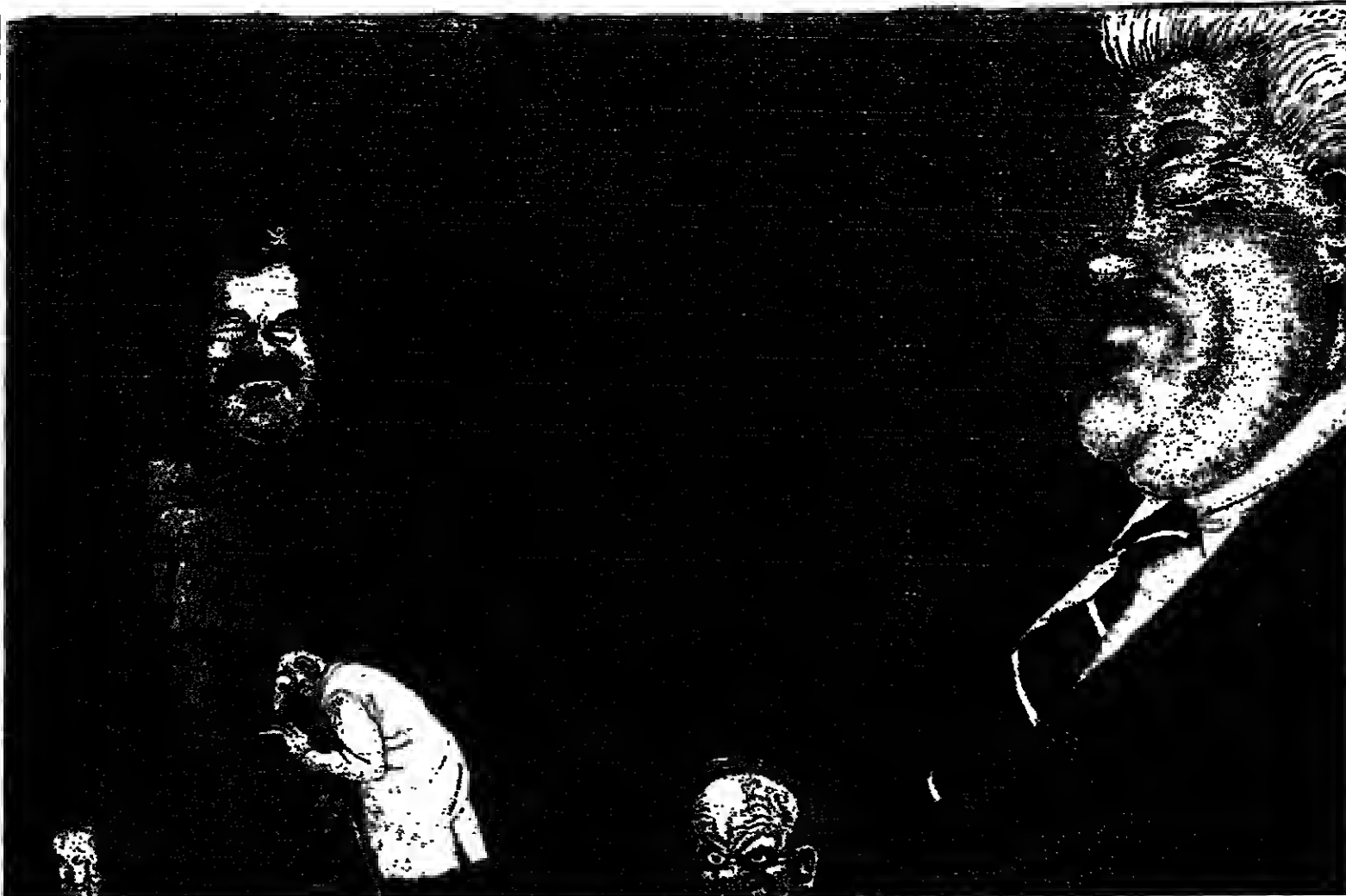
Perhaps we are all Republicans now?

AUSTRALIA has now begun its "fair dinkum debate" — as promised last year by the deputy prime minister — on the Queen's position as head of state. Opening a two-week convention in Canberra on the subject, Prime Minister John Howard made only a token effort to press his monarchist sympathies. He did not believe, he said, that the alternatives "so far canvassed" would deliver a better system. But Mr Howard also acknowledged that Australia's ties with Britain have diminished in the past 40 years. He knows that more than half the Australian public already supports a republic — a figure which rose to two thirds in the latest poll at the weekend.

Two centuries of immigration — whether forced or voluntary — which came mainly from Britain and Ireland have long ago fizzled out. Today more than half of Australia's immigrant population (constituting one in four of the

total population) was born in non-English speaking countries. Only 30 years ago, there were less than 40,000 non-Europeans in Australia. Now there are as many immigrants every year from People's China as from the Queen's Britain.

The constitutional link to the Queen suffered for many Australians a fatal injury 22 years ago when the Governor General of the time, Sir John Kerr, sacked Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. It was done in the Queen's name although she would have known nothing about it. There is still a streak of sympathy for the Queen in person — although not her family. Even Mr Howard on taking office took care to explain he was swearing allegiance to the Queen — but not to "her heirs and successors." Nor can we really complain, in a Britain where the behaviour of those same heirs and successors has given republicanism a new legitimacy.



Letters to the Editor

How to stop Mr Murdoch

POLLY Toynbee (Will Blair dare? February 2) is absolutely right to point the finger at Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation for the underlying problems currently besetting the Independent.

The "savage price war" to which Toynbee refers has only been made possible because News Corporation is able to cross-subsidise the Times through the monopoly profits generated by its broadcasting operation, BSkyB. In the absence of changes to competition law, this threatens the very diversity and plurality of the press that is one of the cornerstones of the democratic process.

However, what Toynbee fails to mention is that Parliament has the opportunity to act next Monday when the House of Lords considers our all-party amendment to the Government's Competition Bill. If this is carried, it will prevent any national newspaper abusing its position by selling below cost to damage its rivals, bringing the newspaper price wars to an end, once and for all.

Lord McNally,
 Viscount Astor,
 House of Lords,
 London SW1A 0PW.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address

Fear and fatherhood

I REALLY hope that members of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority read Catherine Bennett's article (Donor dads, January 31). They seem to accept as given that having information about one's family doesn't necessarily contribute to the development of a happy human being.

In 1994, I Owan Sebap (Glasgow University) discovered that children who possessed adequate and favourable information about an absent parent fared better on measures of behaviour, academic achievement and emotional well-being. He was exploring why children in single-parent families score low on these measurements, regardless of material circumstance, or of how much love is being handed out.

I was born illegitimate and unwanted. I have been able to trace both my natural mother and father. The fantasies and identity crises that crowded my youth have now been replaced by the unremarkable knowledge of who my parents are and, importantly, what they look like. Had I grown up to find out that my father donated his sperm and cared not a toss whether I lived or didn't, I think I'd be really screwed up. Parents, eh! Joanna Traynor,
 1 Birchland Road,
 Plymouth PL7 5DN.

UNLESS it becomes accepted by society and the law that there are differences between becoming a father through socially-binding marriage or partnerships and purely biological means, the plight of the donor inseminated child will continue.

Has it not crossed Catherine Bennett's mind, for instance, that the threat of the Child Support Agency is a major component of a donor insemination company's overriding wish for the anonymity of its donors? Fear will continue to deny DJ children information. Donor men could become pursued by hundreds of financial claims as a result of the actions of the clinic using their sperm, as well as hundreds of later personal painful contacts. Donor men who later choose their own close relationships, with resulting children, may find changes in

the law undermining the families they have chosen to form. The consequences of failing to address these concerns will inevitably lead to men abandoning clinics. They can already see what happens to men "entrapped" by women lying in order to conceive, such as Elizabeth Buttle (Trick by woman, 50, brings calls for fertility curbs, January 22).

Men, as well as women and the resulting children, have a fundamental right to have their choice recognised. The scolliment "No-one has thought of the child in this" does not deal one jot with the father. Men can also have feelings too, surprisingly enough. While a real debate on the role of fatherhood, including men themselves, is denied, nothing will change. Helen Stewart,
 Frankfurt am Main, Germany.



Clean meat is dirty business

THE "naming and shaming" of Toby Baker's Nailssea abattoir (Abattoirs warned on threats to inspectors, January 30) illustrates the fatality of a system which measures neither hygiene nor the quality of the product produced by British abattoirs. I have visited Mr Baker's slaughterhouse many times and, as a qualified environmental health officer and meat inspector, can testify that it is no means unhygienic. It is the model of a small, rural slaughterhouse, the like of which should be encouraged.

Mr Baker's mistake has been his refusal to be cowed by the increasingly irrational demands of the Meat Hygiene Service, which purports to protect the consumer from unhygienic meat but is itself responsible for much of the contamination of meat, through its untidied and suspect inspection procedures. The hygiene scoring system is highly subjective, and includes such gems as "management", the marks awarded taking into account the degree of co-operation with MHS staff. On the basis of an unrepresentative (low) score,

the MHS feels entitled to increase its level of supervision, for which it levies a considerable charge, on top of the massive fees it already extracts from the industry — higher than anywhere else in Europe.

This practice amounts to an administrative fine on slaughterhouses judged to be unco-operative, and is a measure which has greater effect than any other imposed by a court. Yet it escapes the normal checks and balances which apply to other citizens.

The public needs to wake up to what is being done in the name of "hygiene", and ask whether the production of meat, simply by virtue of being an unpopular — in some quarters — trade, entitles government officials to rule by dictat in a manner which would have the civil liberties lobby rushing for the shunt. Rights were applied in another context. The MHS has lost touch with reality; it has become part of the problem — not the solution. Dr Richard North,
 100 Mill Street,
 Wilsby, Bradford BD6 1LY.

Forsyth saga

MARGARET Palmer (Letters, January 31) is quite right: I am no expert in employment law. But even a scribbler has to try to get his facts right. In the first mention of Ms Bullen's name in public, the FCO said her service had been "exemplary". Within 24 hours, it was alleged that:

a) She was not a career civil servant. True, but she was a civil servant. Summary dismissal is a serious matter, and a single outrageous act or sustained incompetence. Ms Bullen demonstrated neither.

b) She was a political appointee. Not true. Douglas Hurd did indeed suggest her name, but FCO vetting established that she had 30 years' experience and glowing references.

c) She was a "card-carrying" Conservative. Not true. Messrs Hurd and Davis confirmed that she had always done her job conscientiously and never mentioned party politics.

Ms Palmer may have lost her job during the Tory government, but I doubt if any Cabinet minister marched into a press conference to ensure that she never got another one. John Forsyth,
 Hertford, Herts.

In brief

WALTER Cairns (Letters, February 2) was right to contrast the growth of fast bowlers with the unchanged length of the cricket pitch. But his proposal to lengthen the pitch would be unfair to spinners. It would be better to force fast bowlers to deliver with part of the front foot behind the bowling crease — giving the batsman an extra four feet in which to see them — while letting slow bowlers deliver, as now, from behind the popping crease. Richard Heller,
 30 Crewdson Road,
 London SW9 0LJ.

WHAT a brilliant notion of David Crown's (Letters, January 31) that the money which the Government plans to spend on the "Millennium white elephant" should go to improving the London Underground. For the majority of us, who prefer to live anywhere rather than in that self-regarding city, that would be about as relevant a way of celebrating the year 2000 as Mr Mandelson's. Peter J. Hampson,
 Blakeway Cottage,
 Shrewsbury SY5 6LT.

More trouble on the Liverpool waterfront

As a trade unionist, I find it totally unacceptable the way Bill Morris tries to justify his union's stance in the Liverpool docks dispute (Letters, January 30), which, by failing to act, forced the dockworkers to end their heroic struggle.

I had the privilege to meet these men and convey my union's support. Yes, Mr Morris did negotiate a pay settlement for them, but it was in favour of the Mersey Docks & Harbour Company and not in the interest of his members. The T&G, having done nothing to fight anti-union legislation — indeed sitting and hiding behind these same laws — are guilty of complicity.

The Liverpool dockers deserve immense praise from all of us around the world for standing firm for their union rights, something their own union has forgotten.

A. Halkalis,
 Panellenic Union of Merchant Marine Engineers,
 21 Boutoulas Street,
 18535 Piraeus, Greece.

INSTEAD of just obeying "the most repressive anti-union laws in the western world", why doesn't Bill Morris's union fight them?

I worked at a firm where, for £3 an hour, we had to stand up throughout our 12-hour shift, both day and night, and only got breaks at the management's discretion. We had to ask permission before going to the toilet. We were not entitled to holiday or sick pay. Women were denied basic maternity rights.

I organised a union (T&G) and was sacked. The T&G assured me that they would fight it all the way. Four days before my appeal for leave of the court to pursue my case at an industrial tribunal, I was informed by the solicitors that the union would "no longer continue with further financial support". The union also had my application to the industrial tribunal struck out.

Like the dockers, my case was, in John Pilger's words (Letters, January 28), "lost because the T&G virtually guaranteed its failure". Nigel Cook,
 129 Preston Road,
 Blackburn, Lancs BB2 6BJ.

BILL Morris says the dockers' dispute cost his union £1 million. The T&G rule says lock-out pay will be £40 per week. Therefore, following instructions from Mr Morris and deputy leader Jack Adams to return to work within days of the dispute starting, and over 300 dockers being locked out for more than two years, my union really did get off cheap.

Mr Morris blames John Pilger for giving false hope and prolonging the agony. He might just as well blame my mum, who gave part of her pension each week to the dockers' families long before John became prominent in the dispute. John Bohanna,
 2 Bunting Court,
 Okeill Dene Estate,
 Liverpool L26 7XX.

A Country Diary

CHESHIRE: As I walked towards the northern woods, past the chapel and the old cedar of Lebanon tree, I was surprised to see bright green leaves — the broad and cheese of my younger days — on the Hawthorn hedge that lined the path, and behind the small church, a large rhododendron bush covered with bright pink flowers. It was the bitterly cold easterly wind and grey sky that reminded me it was still only late January. I was on my way to find a small shrub, whose normal flowering period is late January — the spurge laurel — having noticed that its only relative in the UK, the mezezon, was already in full bloom in a neighbour's garden. Near the large ox-bow, I stopped to see if the snowdrops had appeared again and found just one small patch of strap-shaped, blue-green leaves with pure white buds still surrounded by their protective sheaths. Although still a beautiful flower, for me

it had lost some of its magic, not being able to live up to one of its more vivid local names — the "snow plover". It seldom has competition from other plants in the normally drab days of January, but this year it was having to share its space on the woodland floor with dog-mercury, lesser celandine and primrose, all well ahead of their usual March appearance. I allowed myself one further distraction, which was to watch four male blackbirds, two magpies, a pair of mistle thrushes and a jay, mobbing a tawny owl they had discovered roosting in a tall spruce tree — other than an occasional turn of the head, the owl did not seem to be unduly concerned. When I reached the spurge laurel, I found the small green flowers fully open, clustered among the shrub's upper leaves where they would bloom until the arrival of the first pollinating bees of the year.

J M THOMPSON

Diary
Matthew Norman

WITH this year's award just made to Ted Hughes, we take a trip down Memory Lane to the Whitbread Book Of The Year Prize of a decade ago. In 1988, having won the Booker, Salman Rushdie was not a favourite with the Satanic Verses, and he would have won but for an old foe, Douglas Hurd, chairing the panel of judges, turning up late for the meeting and with the decision all but made in Rushdie's favour, interjected: "Oh no, we've already had enough trouble in Bradford." The prize went instead to Paul Sayer for his *Confessions Of Madness*. Attempts to verify this with other judges met with mixed luck. The words, "Hello, is that Mr Freud?" elicit from the admissible Sir Clement the response, "There hasn't been a Mr Freud for 12 years," and a witty replacement of his receiver. Another is more wordy, saying, "This is a fair reflection of the general tenor, although Douglas Hurd's remarks may well have been ill-healed." Perhaps this is so — but how remarkably prescient they appear 10 years on.

FROM an ancient award to one of the nominees for February's PC Bards. He is Mark Anderson, who, while a motorist he recognised as Mike Reid, the EastEnders actor. The excitement proved too much for his head, and he was taken to hospital. The sergeant was surprised to note that, on the fixed penalty ticket, PC Anderson had entered the name of one Frank Butcher.

THE literary world stands by for an explosive work from a friend of Olga's. It is a history of the landmine. Following in Diana's footsteps, Lady O is raising funds to go to Angola and Cambodia, and says she wants "to see if it is possible to put the genie back in the lamp". An intriguing departure, perhaps, from Olga's approach to other defence issues. Nevertheless, a running defence of the landmine cannot be dismissed from the founder of Women and Families for Defence (Escher and Striborn Chantney Makers Say Bomb the Soviets to Perdition).

WHAT the Good Lord has finally given to publishing with one hand, he cruelly takes away with the other. Terry Major-Ball is not, as a so-called rival reports, collaborating on a book with his brother. However, he still contemplates a solo work on the nature of women. "I must meet a great deal of ladies these days, many of them amusing and beautiful," Terry explains. "Take Jilly Cooper" (ah, the spirit of Max Miller). "The first time I met Jilly, she gave me an enormous hug, and I disappeared into all that hair. I imagine," says Terry, dreamily, "that's what it would be like if you stepped out of a plane into that fluffy kind of cloud... cumulus, I think it's called." It is, and upon this meteorological note we say our farewells.

FROM the Erectile Dysfunction Clinic of the Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham, comes advice for those suffering from Priapism. Should detumescence have failed to occur after four hours, Sister Gill Peck offers the following: 1) Walk up and down stairs; 2) Take two teaspoons of Sudafed cough syrup; 3) If the problem persists, lie flat on the floor and cycle with legs in the air, while applying a frozen peas to the affected area; 4) Apply for a Green Card and become President of the USA. 4) was just my topical joke. In truth, if 3) doesn't sort it, call 999 and pray your sense of humour survives the trip to casualty.

SKYPORT, the airport staff bulletin, reports a setback for a woman once sitting on a fortune. "Customs officers arrested a woman at Bogota airport," it reports, "after becoming suspicious of her unusually large buttocks." Closer inspection revealed 8lbs of heroin surgically implanted into the cheeks of her backside.

SALES OF TRANQUILISERS TO STOCKBROKERS ARE WAY UP. STILL NINE WEEKS NAUT. 

Bill and Tony's big adventure

Commentary Hugo Young

TONY Blair is Bill Clinton's friend. Beyond the 67 per cent of Americans who still think the president is doing a fine job, he's one of his only global friends. When he goes to Washington tomorrow, a fulsome reception awaits. No British prime minister has been closeted longer with a president than Blair will be with Clinton, though any deficiency in that respect can only have been due to Ronald Reagan's attention-span. For Clinton, in his predicament, Blair's embrace will be part of his resurrection.

This is all very gratifying, but deeply misleading. While temporarily the bestower of a favour, Mr Blair is more chronically destined to be the acquiescent slave. The same old story, only more so. He is a strong domestic leader, certainly. He sweeps the president into his aura of decency and command. A photocall will be uplifting for both of them. But what is un-

folding between London and Washington shows the same submissive respect by the lesser for the stronger partner as prevailed in the Reagan-Thatcher years, highlighted now by Britain's solitary, potentially catastrophic, part in a joint venture against Iraq. The bonding began, for Blair, in domestic concerns. He was always fascinated by how Bill Clinton turned the Democrats away from what they call liberalism. The junk of old ideology was a common task, in which Clinton led the way, as Thatcher had led Reagan in the rightist revolutions of the 1980s. The politics of spin, and the supremacy of manipulation, were other priorities in which Clinton had much to teach. All that's glibly crossed the Atlantic from west to east, in the cause of redefining the meaning of the progressive idea. One might add to that, Blair's natural affinities. Though less aggressively Anglo-Saxon than any predecessor, his cultural affiliations appear to be preponderantly American. He sees the US as teacher in a wider sense, as witness the presence on Concorde of Jack Straw, apparently following Michael Howard in a quest for penal lessons drawn from one of the least sophisticated penal jurisdictions in the advanced world. For all its talk about a fresh start in Europe, New Labour has shown a greater

propensity to lecture than to learn from Europe in any field: another eerie echo of Mrs Thatcher. In foreign policy, it would not be true to say that London has been completely servile. The Government has some-what displeased Washington by its public pressure on the US to make good its huge funding debt to the United Nations. Over Bosnia, Robin Cook's notably more energetic policy on the capture of indicted war criminals not only put the Riddick-Hurd inertia to shame but was his own initiative, goading Washington into line behind it. But now we have Iraq. At present, Britain stands alone beside the US in mobilising forces and getting ready to both. No Arab state is willing openly to support this strategy, and many of the large ones, notably Egypt and Saudi Arabia, are counselling against it. There is no consensus for action in the Security Council, and though France has shown signs of qualifying her rank hostility, both Paris and Moscow, the soft cops in this affair, are becoming very alarmed by the stance to which Washington, with Blair apparently alongside, is getting more committed by the day. Saddam is an evil, dangerous, dreadful force at large in the Middle East, who is contemptuously defying the UN, and is developing a capacity

for biological warfare that makes him, in the light of his manifest disregard for humanity, a menace to the peace of the region and the world. He's a threat which the international community has failed to deal with for seven years, whose weapon-building capacities, despite the under-regarded heroism of the UN inspectors, are now in the gravest danger of being re-developed. Renewing the bombing, however, brings with it almost as great a danger. I write as someone who defended the invasion and bombing policy before and during the Gulf War. Then there was a coherent alliance, UN-based legitimacy, and an achievable objective. On this occasion, the consensus is absent and the war is nowhere near clear enough, or, if clear, not seriously credible as a means to the stated end of getting rid of Saddam's military capacities and/or his

Bombing will do nothing for the Iraqi people and nothing for the Middle East

entire regime. The history of bombing argues strenuously against any such convenient outcome. The danger of unleashing biological agents through scoring a direct hit is being openly discussed by military observers. Any secondary targets — indirect hits, with collateral civilian damage — invite one to suppose that it may be for the Iraqi people's own good that their country, and they themselves, should once again be bombed from the West. That argument was used by the Foreign Office minister, Tony Lloyd, in an under-

Yellow Pages, yellow wages — in our union



Mark Steel

I AM JUST old enough to remember the days when union leaders appeared on television with their waistcoat buttons done up wrong and gravy down their tie. "With regard to the offer we can only reconfirm that we are appalled at the level of unemployment contained within this offer," they would say. The modern union leader is well dressed, an expert in camera technique, writes grammatically perfect letters to the broadsheets, and makes even less sense than before. After the defeat of the Liverpool dockers' strike, a debate has been taking place in this paper's letters page between Bill Morris and John Pilger. Pilger blamed the defeat on the TGWU's "craven silence", and Morris replied with "Why does Mr Pilger always reserve his venom for workers' own organisations?" But Pilger's most famous campaign was to expose the atrocities of Pol Pot. Perhaps Morris has got Pol Pot mixed up with someone else, and thinks that instead of being leader of the Khmer Rouge he was North-east regional secretary of the GMB.

Morris also writes that Pilger wanted an excuse to "renew his vendetta against the Transport and General Workers' Union". In which case Pilger, who has spent over two years campaigning for sacked TGWU dockers, is pretty useless at vendettas. He would be no good in the Mafia, with Sonny Corleone forever taking him to one side and asking, "John, why are you raising money for the Tallia family's Christmas automatic handgun appeal?" With Pilger replying, "Purely business Sonny. It's part of my vendetta against them." Morris then blames "John Pilger and others like him" for giving the dockers "false hope" by claiming they could win.

So to lead a successful campaign you must always tell people they haven't a prayer. If Bill Morris had been at Agincourt his stirring speech would have been, "I wouldn't bother going onto that breach boys, have you seen the size of some of them French? Any way it's against the law to flare your nostrils." It would be marvellous if Bill spread this message of despair to everyone else he met. Because on a £70,000 salary, recently installed on the board of the Bank of England,

and nicely placed at the Queen and Prince Philip's golden wedding banquet between Lieutenant Commander J Beavis and Sir Paul Condon, in a matter of weeks he could have had Britain's rulers deciding there is no point in getting up in the morning, and handing over power to a vegetarian co-op in Hackney. With almost any strike being against the law, backing the dockers, it is argued, would have been playing into the employers' hands. This is the "Don't fight back, that's what they want you to do" theory of history. For example, during the German occupation of France, when some went off to organise the French resistance, and others said: "Don't ambush them, blow up their tanks and shoot the Kommandant. That's exactly what they want you to do." Union leaders ponder how to stop the decline in union membership, and produce insurance schemes and credit cards to attract members. The trouble is you can get these things anyway with the help of Yellow Pages, but if your union cannot defend you against a ruthless employer there is no point in ringing Direct Line instead. As far as I know there is no part of their recorded message that goes: "If you'd like to set up a picket line press six."

So the greatest example of union recruitment in recent times is the 11 million Poles who joined Solidarnosc in three months in 1981. Bill Morris probably thinks: "Letch Wales must have been offering a bloody good deal on holiday insurance."

UNIONS depend on the principle of standing up for one another instead of just for yourself. Five hundred ex-dockers, many of whom were near ruin, retirement and could have opted for an easy life, sacrificed a tremendous amount for that principle, and will be remembered with great affection by the many people they touched. Just as everyone knows about the slave who said, "I am Spartacus", but no one ever remembered the one who said, "It's him, this one here, fourth from the left. After all we can't break the law. But tell the Senate I'm willing to reach a negotiated settlement."

A ski race to riches

As the Winter Olympics get underway in Japan at the end of this week, Andrew Jennings reveals the billionaires who will benefit



AS LIVING standards collapse in the Tiger economies, three of Asia's leading billionaires will be beaming into the cameras at the end of this week at the opening of the Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. Despite the meltdown of their currencies, they are medal-winners in the new world order where sport, politics, corporatism, and cronyism collide. Look out for Mohammed "Bob" Hasan, one of President Suharto's closest confidants. Hasan, who fronts businesses owned by the presidential family, symbolising the "crony capitalism" that brought Indonesia to its knees, is on the secretive International Olympic Committee. One of the conditions of the IMF's \$43 billion Indonesian bail-out is the dismantling of Hasan's plywood monopoly (Indonesia is one of the world's major suppliers). Hasan is one of the world's most active rainforest loggers: those loggers were accused of contributing to the smoke haze that settled over south-east Asia last autumn. Hasan has just laid off 2,500 workers, but losing the plywood concession won't bankrupt him. The government recently gave him a large

chunk of the country's growing cell-phone monopoly. Indonesian reporters are jailed for seeking to expose government corruption while Hasan publishes a weekly magazine that takes a benign view of the cartels. Opponents say that when Suharto's power is eclipsed, "Hasan will be the first person to disappear off the face of the earth". Hasan's contribution to sport consists of a round of golf every week with Suharto. He also sponsors long-distance road races with fabulous prize money. For this, Hasan will be in the front row of celebrities at the Olympic activities. Close by will be Mr Lee Kun-Hee, chairman of Samsung, the second-largest conglomerate in South Korea. Mr Lee joined the IOC in July 1996. Five weeks later, in a Seoul courtroom, he was convicted of contributing suit-

cases of cash to a \$1.5-billion slush fund run by two former presidents, and given a two-year suspended jail sentence. Last autumn, as the Korean currency was about to plunge off the financial radar, Samsung pledged \$40 million of sponsorship to the IOC. Lee, salary \$6.5 million, is reluctant to admit blame: "I regret having not fully performed my duty to head off the economic catastrophe," was his best offer by means of an apology. Lee and Hasan were both invited to join the IOC by its president Juan Antonio Samaranch, a 78-year-old political throwback forged in mid-century fascist Spain. Samaranch's favourite crocy, this fortnight in Japan will be Yoshiaki Tsutsumi (64). Before the collapse of Japan's "bubble economy", Tsutsumi was the richest man in the world. He is the principal ar-

chitect and beneficiary of the Nagano Olympics. Tsutsumi's Seibu group is said to own one-sixth of Japan's land-mass, plus railways, hotels, sport franchises, golf courses and ski resorts. He became president of Japan's national Olympic committee, and led the campaign to secure the games for Nagano. Some visiting IOC members were entertained in hot tubs by compliant geishas. In 1996, Tsutsumi arranged the donation of \$20 million from leading Japanese companies to Samaranch's Olympic museum in Switzerland. Tsutsumi-owned companies have carved dozens of ski runs out of the mountains. Covered to snow, they'll look picturesque on TV: but anti-Olympic activists have posted pictures on the Internet showing the hills scraped clean of forests, bare slopes remod-

elled for skiers. The Japanese government has spent a stunning \$19 billion on new venues, roads, and a new bullet train stopping conveniently where Tsutsumi owns a holiday complex. The Olympics have become a machine, transferring wealth from the public to the private sector. The immense profits go to the accounts of the IOC. Their sponsors and TV networks also make huge gains. Masao Ezawa stands at the other end of the machine. A 47-year-old weaver, who leads a local anti-Olympics group, Ezawa predicts tax bills of up to \$40,000 for families in the Nagano region, adding: "We're impoverishing ourselves for 20 years to pay for a two-week-long event."

Andrew Jennings is the author of *The New Lords of the Flings*, published by Pocket Books.

My recipe for your health



Tessa Jowell

IN AN important sense, contracts are the basis of government. You work if you're fortunate enough to do so. If you do, you pay taxes to provide the defence of our country, protection against crime, help for those in trouble. We all pay. The Government delivers. That's the contract in areas like taxes, and benefits. But we think that this approach is one that can apply in other areas too. In the USA, rightwing Republicans tried to codify this in their "Contract with America". In Britain, the

Conservatives tried to do the same with their Citizens' Charter. Both were failures. Both were rejected by the voters. Why? Because neither were really contracts. They tried to convince people, for whom services had been consistently and systematically either worsened or withdrawn, that they were now in the driving seat. But if they are to carry real meaning, contracts between the people and their government have to mean more than ringing up an un-manned telephone number about comes on motorways. We will publish, shortly, our plans to improve the health of all the people of this country and central to them will be a new contract between the people of Britain and the Government — a new contract for better health for all. That contract will cut two ways. In the past, strategies to improve health and prevent illness have been too

much about blame: people being to blame for their own poor health because they refused to heed the advice of a well-intentioned but often out-of-touch government. Or governments being to blame for trying to enact grand plans of social engineering which would somehow automatically make people healthier, without any effort on their own part. We will move away from blame. A modern vision of better health focuses instead on opportunity, and responsibility. And all of us — individuals, families, local communities, national organisations and the Government — have a part to play in securing it. This vision, of a right to better health, coupled with a responsibility on all of us to achieve it, is at the heart of the new people's contract on health which we will set out in the green paper. It will be rigorous. It will be challenging. It will be precise. It will address people's

concerns about their health. And it will offer a new way to improve them. We will sign up to our side of the contract. Just as we are investing new money in the National Health Service, and looking for reforms of the NHS at the same time, so, too, on issues of public health we set tough new goals for ourselves in our new contract, and look to others to play their part as well. FOOD safety and healthy eating is an example. We all want our food to be safe to eat. Under the kind of contracts on health we envisage, the Government's role is to establish the Food Standards Agency as we have now done. That will detail the tough targets we expect our food producers to meet. The local role would include local workplaces providing better and more healthy food and local schools shifting towards

healthier eating. The individual role would be to make the choice about what to eat — but based on information provided nationally and locally, which is clear, understandable, unbiased and accurate. That's the kind of contract we are offering on food. That's the kind of contract we want to offer in other areas. That's the kind of contract that will work — and which will improve the health of us all. The essence of the contract recognises that government can't do everything, any more than people acting for their own health will necessarily secure the maximum improvements in health. Progress will only be achieved by a proper recognition of the balance of responsibility that falls between government, local action and personal responsibility. Conversely, if government fails to take action, only government can take then, at worst, people's health will be jeopardised and opportunities to prevent illness lost.

Tessa Jowell is Public Health Minister.

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Mario Schifano

Images of Italy's Warhol

MARIO Schifano, the "Italian Warhol" who has died of a heart attack aged 63, was one of the most audacious Italian artists of his generation. Born in Rome, Libya, he grew up in Rome, where he spent most of his life. He worked briefly with his father as a restorer at the Museo Etrusco in the Villa Giulia, before taking up painting. Initially in an expressive abstract style, which characterised his first exhibition in 1959.

The freedom with which he handled paint at this time remained a dominant feature of his career, even after he became involved in the invention of Italian pop art. He began to attract attention in 1960 as one of the 5 *Pittori Romani* '60, who also included Tano Festa and Franco Angeli.

Like Jasper Johns and the American pop artists, he was particularly interested in exploring the relationship between art and other forms of imagery. His early works often incorporated bold blocks of colour and writing, evoking the symbolism of traffic signs and advertising, while always clearly emphasising the drips of paint and irregular outlines with which they were made. In 1962, for example, he drowned the unmistakable calligraphy of the Coca-Cola logo in a field of fluid green (rather than red) paint. Such enigmatic celebrations of American popular culture brilliantly captured the atmosphere of *Dolce Vita* Italy, and were eminently exportable.

Schifano's first exhibition



In New York, as one of the "New Realists" at the Sidney Janis Gallery in 1962, began a period of great international success, both artistically and socially. He was linked in particular with the actress Anita Pallenberg, a friend of the Rolling Stones, and gained a well-deserved reputation for high living. However, his progress was abruptly interrupted in 1966, when he was accused of handling 50 grammes of marijuana found in the possession of a Venetian noblewoman; not even the eloquent testimony of his friend Alberto Moravia was able to save him from jail.

Although this conviction was recently quashed, Schifano's own dependence on drugs, of various kinds, was never a secret, and inevitably affected his health and productivity.

Despite his personal difficulties, Schifano maintained throughout his career a perspective on culture. His fascination

with Americana — which included a taste for its cars — did not prevent him from analysing his own country's heritage. Characteristically, he played with the significance and cultural associations of great artistic icons by reworking the compositions of figures as varied as Leonardo da Vinci, the Futurists and Giorgio De Chirico. In 1972 for example, he transformed De Chirico's dark, portentous *Metachord* (1912) into a brilliant combination of vivid pinks, reds, blues and yellows. Schifano based his own works on photographic projections of the original image, over which he applied quick-drying liquid nitro paints with nonchalance and speed.

Schifano's most ironic artistic tribute was his version, made in 1966, of the Futurists' famous group photograph, in which the great iconoclasts were themselves subjected to caricature analysis, their formidable figures converted



Delight in reconstruction — Mario Schifano (above left) and his photographic homage *Futurismo revisitato a colori*, 1965

into a line of blurred yet instantly recognisable silhouettes. Schifano's admiration for the Futurists also involved a desire to represent movement in his own compositions, while *Scollerie*, a film that he created in 1968, emphasised his concept of the world as being permanently in flux, an experience to which the Futurists could doubtless have related.

Despite this foray into filmmaking, Schifano's interest in cinema and television was expressed primarily through his painting. In 1970 he created a series of works imitating the outline of a television screen, which presented, in exaggerated form, the distortions of an electronic image.

These effects were combined with quintessentially modern, television subjects. In one case we seem to be looking through a car windscreen at a highway dominated by its road markings. Again the signs and symbols of the 20th century recur in their most banal, stereotyped manifestations, but transformed by Schifano's characteristically brilliant hues and vigorous brushwork.

Although Schifano's style was always painterly, it was not without variation. In his early work he often used only one or two colours, contrasted with the plain background around them, while later on, as well as widening his palette, he applied the pigment

in dense layers, concealing the drawing beneath. On occasion he mixed other materials with the paint, as when he added sand in order to imitate the concrete Baroque Archival in the Berlin-Projekt series of cityscapes (1968).

Ultimately, Schifano's inimitable gestural style recalls the bravura and energy of abstract expressionism. His passion for the act of painting, and his communication of this to his viewers, was most spectacularly displayed in the enormous *Chimera* (1969), which was created as a performance in a large Florentine square.

Remarkably, this work, which consisted of 10 panels, each two metres square, was

completed in a single evening, albeit with a team of assistants. Its enigmatic mythological subject, so typical of Italian art at this time, marked a departure from Schifano's normal themes, but its silhouette forms and swatches of vivid colour were unmistakably his own.

Schifano was an artist of enormous flair, but his broad interests at times led him away from painting. He once joined a commune out of despair for the social utility of art, and he threw himself into life outside his studio with the same energy that appears in his work. A warm man, he was, as Corrado Levi wrote, "easy-going with people, grateful for any kindness he

gets, always responsive with true feelings, even though his wits are never blunted by affection. He is open to suggestion, ready to change if someone suggests something else, steady in his ideas, yet flexible, open to engulf other people's desires, to make them also his." It is these qualities, combined with a thoughtful, penetrating mind, that made his art communicate so successfully with his public over nearly four decades. He is survived by a son.

Christopher Masters

Mario Schifano, artist, born September 20, 1934; died January 26, 1998

Rt Rev Alastair Haggart

Rigorous, reticent, but righteous

THE Right Rev Alastair Haggart, former Bishop of Edinburgh and Primate of the Scottish Episcopal Church, who has died aged 82, had a vitality, wit and courage which many half his age might envy and leaves Britain's ecclesiastical landscape impoverished.

On the night in mid-December when he had the stroke which led to his death, he had spoken with passion at a theological forum on the Christmas story.

With pride he recalled a Christmas Eve when he had climbed Dundee Law, the highest hill in the city, with his seven-year-old daughter, "Daddy," she had said, "How would you say what house a star was over?"

The tough, energetic force of such questions was one of Alastair's motivating delights. It explained his anger at the intellectual and moral sloth of priests and ministers who would not risk being truthful with their congregations, and who denied to their people the theological adulthood they themselves had been given access to in their training.

As pastor, as theological educator, as bishop, as Primate, as ecumenical pioneer in the United Kingdom, this gritty integrity was the hallmark of everything he did. Students found him tough. One, now the youngest bishop in the Anglican church in Canada, had run-

ning battles with Alastair, was regarded by him as an "intelligent delinquent", and yet, like the Syro-Phoenician woman with Jesus, probably moved him to new ground.

Certainly, both in Scotland, and in the context of the British Council of Churches, Alastair embodied the denial of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* that, "the human-kind couldn't bear reality."

He insisted on making connections: between scholarship and pastoral care; between preaching and reading; between experience and judgment; between politics and the kingdom of God. The students from Coates Hall during his time as Principal of the "Piskie" Theological College were conspicuously motivated; culturally literate; interested in how psychology, physics, sociology linked to the traditional disciplines of theological study. That was no mere coincidence: it was required awareness.

As chairman of the division of ecumenical affairs in the British Council of Churches, he was one of those who forged the high-risk shift to the new ecumenical structures in Britain, in which the Roman Catholic church could be full participants.

In the steering group of the "inter-church process" he toiled valiantly, with colleagues like Philip Morgan and Colin Davey, to articu-



Awareness and astuteness — the Rt Rev Alastair Haggart, a great preacher, had a fund of witty anecdotes

late the deomonnations' need of one another, the nonsense of separation. He drafted the seminal introduction to the Swinwick Declaration, when the churches agreed to ratify the "Not Strangers but Pilgrims" process, in the "Marigold Book" — *Churches Together in Pilgrimage*.

This requires a shift in the thinking, feeling and action of our churches, from ecumenism as an extra which absorbs energy, to ecumenism as a dimension of all we do, which releases en-

ergy through the sharing of resources. "This will also need to be a self-conscious act of self-denial by the churches, so that when new work is proposed, in every department of church life, local, intermediate or national, each does not simply go ahead as if no one else existed."

One of Alastair Haggart's disappointments was that recent church life in Britain had not sustained that commitment: that press and radio constantly approached

the Archbishop of Canterbury or Cardinal Hume, or the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, but rarely John Ridd, the General Secretary of the Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland. Nor did the church leaders who signed the Swinwick Declaration protest.

One public sadness must be that a man who crafted skilled and subtle sermons, who was full of witty and wonderful anecdotes and who inspired hundreds of students, many of them now in key positions in the Angli-

'This requires a shift in thinking ... to ecumenism as a dimension of all we do'

can communion, never published. That, perhaps, is its own tribute to the gifts of a man who has gone into people rather than into print.

His wit, astuteness and truthfulness have enriched Scottish church life for decades, and have been recognised by the whole Anglican Communion, given his role in the 1988 Lambeth Conference, his contribution to the life of the Episcopal Church in the US, and his huge pastoral, intellectual and personal links across the world.

He also, in a Scottish idiom, undemonstrative and reticent, has known how to love. Peggy, his first wife who died in 1963 and Mary who survives him with his daughters by Peggy, his students, his clergy, and the huge circle of people who will miss his presence, but have been changed by his life.

Elizabeth Templeton

Right Rev Alastair Haggart, Primate and bishop, born October 10, 1915; died January 11, 1998

Kenneth Loveland

Words and music

THE slight of journalist Kenneth Loveland, who has died aged 82, holding forth at the New Theatre in Cardiff was often as entertaining as the events on stage there, the home of Welsh National Opera.

The birth and untimely late 1940s infancy of the WNO almost coincided with his arrival in Wales from his native Kent to join the *South Wales Argus*. He charted the opera's progress, encouraged its musicians and criticised it witheringly on occasions, whenever he felt that producers had exceeded their briefs. It was a measure of his standing as a professional that the company took notice of the opprobrium as well as the praise.

When Loveland took over as editor of the *Argus* in 1951, almost nothing was written outside Wales about the principality's musical creativity. He came to an arrangement with the paper which allowed him to travel extensively in pursuit of music, especially that made by fledgling Welsh musicians away from home. Many — like Dame Gwyneth Jones, Sir Geraint Evans, and composers Alan Hoddinott and William Mathias — remained lifelong friends.

He edited the *Argus* until 1970, but continued as music critic on what was probably the only regional paper publishing 2,000-word articles on the Salzburg Festival. That was a mark of the authority and prestige he had established.

Loveland was born on the Isle of Sheppey. His childhood musical education had consisted of racing home from



Kenneth Loveland ... always an honest appraisal

school to listen to concerts on the wireless. He worked on local papers before and after army war service. Early in his career, he freelanced for the national press while holding down his job in Newport. There were tales of Valleys choral concerts where he would recall to earnest bandmasters recent meetings with Herbert von Karajan in Berlin.

But when he said he knew a celebrated musician, he meant it and for him music was a serious business, too. He received a string of domestic and foreign awards, including a presentation from the Italian president and, from Prince Charles, an honorary degree from the University of Wales.

It was typical of Loveland that he should fly back from a major European music festival one day and drive out the next to some modest event in the Gwent countryside, where his presence was almost *de rigueur*. One of these was the Llantilio Crossenny Festival at St. Teilo's Church, near Abergavenny. He was captivated by its setting and had long "booked" a plot in its churchyard. He is survived by his devoted wife, Anna.

Nigel Jarrett

Kenneth Loveland, journalist, born October 12, 1915; died January 25, 1998

Birthdays

Maev Alexander, actress, 50; Gillian Ayres, painter, 68; Shelley Berman, comedian, 72; Michael Dickinson, racehorse trainer, 48; Val Doonican, singer, 69; Tim Flowers, footballer, 31; Prof Stuart Hall, radical sociologist and broadcaster, 66; Gavin Henderson, principal, Trinity College of Music, 50; Jeremy Kemp, actor, 63; Baroness (Della) O'Cathain, former director, Barbican Centre, 60; Elaine Padmore, director, Danish Royal Opera, 51; Brig Dame Mary Phil, former director, WRAC, 82; Glen Telford, ballet choreographer, 72; Frankie Vaughan, singer, 70.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN YESTERDAY'S paper (February 2), we reported that Alan Duncan MP was involved in a Conservative Party briefing concerning the late wife of John Reid MP. We now accept that this is untrue and apologise unreservedly to Mr Duncan.

WE FAILED to incorporate a late amendment into John Brice's letter about speed enforcement cameras in last week's Notes and Queries (January 26). This should have said that marks on the road continue for 25 metres, not 10 metres. The calculation is that motorists must drive at 28,000mph to escape detection.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, by telephoning 0171 239 9529 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday; Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk.

Death Notices

ROSLAND, Marie, on January 30th 1998, peacefully in her sleep and of Preswath, Manchester. Dearly loved sister of Margaret and the late John McGeehan. Dear aunt of Rory, Alex and Fiona and loving great aunt of the many grandchildren. Burial at the Service Church, Kildale on Friday February 6th at 10.00am, followed by interment at Lillibridge Funeral Services, Tel. 011 773 2740.

CLARK, Sheila, aged 75 on 31/1/98, beloved wife of the late Stanley and dear mother of Rosemary, Anthony, David, Michael (deceased) and much loved grandmothers of Rebecca, Helen, Hannah and Katie. Funeral, Friday 6th at 2pm, Hamstead Church. Family flowers only please. Donations to Save the Children Fund and Air Force and Royal Marines Fund for Research. Cremation, on Thursday 28th January, at 11.00am, Crematorium, Slough. Sheila loved to travel, to the Shetlands, Azores, Madeira, Portugal, France, Italy, Spain, Greece, etc. Sheila was a member of the Labour Party (old) and in all aspects of life, she was a devoted and loving mother. Burial at St. Peter & Pauls Church, Exeter, on Friday 6th at 10.00am. Family flowers only. Donations to CAFOD.

In Memoriam

HAMPSTEAD, Walter Bernard, died York 20/2. Remembered this day and every day. D. and M. MORRIS. Yvonne, died 10 years ago today. Still greatly missed.

Births

STEVENS, Jo Anne and Jonathan a son, wife Oscar, born 18/1/98. Many thanks to the excellent staff at Lillibridge Hospital, Cardiff.

WTO place your announcement telephonically 0171 713 4887 or fax 0171 713 4123 between 9am and 5pm Mon-Fri.

Jackdaw



Base is best

BASE is an acronym for building, antenna, span and earth. "Based" buildings in the UK include the Hilton hotel and the Canary Wharf tower. Electricity pylons and aerials come under the term antenna, whilst span means bridges. Finally, earth relates to cliffs. Gary Conner has jumped off all four types.

Still a highly experimental pastime, the sport provides a new and stiff challenge to experienced skydivers who, rightly, view opening their chutes from 100 feet above the ground to be a harder task than from a few thousand feet

from an aircraft. Although illegal in the US, it is a more popular and better organised sport there than in Europe, where base jumpers remain a secretive and elusive band of brothers.

"I've done a lot of extreme sports, but nothing gives me the same high as base jumping," insists Gary. "I know that a lot of people think that what I do is insane. I see it as my profession and I sometimes question the sanity of people who never try to experience life. Base jumpers are anything but crazed characters. Can you imagine the consequences if I were in a crazy mind waiting to jump? Believe me, you need a clear mind, body and soul, in order to carry out the deed in a correct fashion. It is down to one's ability to remain calm when the reality counts."

"During the moments before jumping, the mind asks a lot of questions about yourself, questions that only those who place themselves in extreme conditions can fully answer. Then an icy calmness comes over you, so calm that you wouldn't even hear a

bomb explode beside you. Then you are ready. . . . "Nothing comes close to that feeling when you are in mid-air, when you have made the choice and when, on landing, you realise you have overcome your fear and succeeded in overcoming the huge mental challenge the situation has presented you with. That's why the adrenalin rush is so much bigger than with anything else I have attempted. That's why I do it."

Jumping for joy, Base jumping in Adrenalin.

Vital statistics

105 is the number of knickers Charles Dupon, 52, stole from his neighbours, over 16 years.

300,000 is the amount in pounds that Twycross Zoo is spending on a new play-area for three gorillas which will include, among other things, a colour TV.

1,775 is the amount in dollars two actors were paid for being locked inside a cage to live like chickens for a week. The arty Canadian film,

Chicken Men, is due for release some time in 1998. From More!

Shorts change

HAVING fun with art can be not only fun, but healthy. What matters, first, is that the joke/object doesn't assume undue significance or get ideas above its station; and, second, that the joke is a good one, although it is only ever good once, and is not susceptible — unlike great art — to visitations (or re-visitations).

I think it is possible to wear the Michelangelo shorts and still uphold a belief in the transcendence of great art. I don't think wearing them necessarily exposes our values (the matter of what else it exposes is purely a design question); nevertheless, how would it affect us if we were told that, say, the Director of the National Gallery wore them? That would rather fly in the face of propriety — talk about the enemy within (the shorts). The climate in which Michelangelo boxer shorts

stand out as an icon of design is coming to an end as we rediscover, without shame or guilt, great art. The attitude/sensibility/theory conditions which give rise to the shorts will, in the fullness of time, be washed up, over and out. Their time is running out; they will soon be indistinguishable from pants of exhaustion. The old latinism *ars longa, vita brevis* sums it up: roughly translated, it is



Art for art's sake ...

that art has a long life, but shorts have a limited lifespan. *Art Review* gets its knickers in a twist.

Sport & thought

CLAUDIO TAMBURRINI, a former professional soccer player in Argentina, is a sports philosopher at Gothenburg University in Sweden.

Q: What's a typical sports philosophy problem?
A: One is the so-called logical inconsistency thesis. It says that when a player violates a rule, he or she ceases to play a game because it is definitionally impossible to play a game and at the same time violate its rules. I disagree. If you violate a constitutive rule of a game — for instance, if you start kicking the ball when you are playing basketball — then you are no longer playing basketball. But it is perfectly possible to violate an auxiliary rule — like fouling in basketball — and still play the game.
Q: Let's try some real-world applications. Is it OK for pros to play ice hockey in the Winter Olympics?

A: Yes. Elite amateur sports is now a profession. There's no need for a distinction that no longer exists in reality.

Q: Ballroom dancing was recently recognised by the International Olympic Committee. Is that a sport?

A: It meets the conditions. I define a sport as a game involving predominantly physical skills that is widely practised over a long period of time.

Q: Billiards was also recognised. Sport?

A: There, the standard of physical activity is a problem.

Q: So?

A: It's a thorny matter about billiards. *New York Times* magazine proving that Eric Cantona is not the only sports philosopher.

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk, fax 0171-713 4368; write Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Hannah Pool

Analysis The Gulf crisis

War has been defined as policy by other means. But, in the West's brinkmanship with Saddam, what is the policy? **David Fairhall** and **Ian Black** outline the options

War games with targets but no aims

THE military objective least likely to be achievable by the air strikes Washington and London have in mind is the direct elimination of Saddam Hussein's remaining weapons of mass destruction — well concealed drums of VX nerve gas or bottles of deadly anthrax spores. What is more or less certain, however, is that air strikes will put an end to a United Nations inspection programme that has successfully rooted out the larger part of that weapons programme, particularly the nuclear facilities.

The rationale for military action therefore depends on broader objectives that can more reliably be achieved, plus the desperate hope that somehow they will trigger Saddam's downfall.

Three main kinds of target are likely to be involved:

- those bearing at least indirectly on Iraq's residual capability for mass destruction, such as chemical works and biological laboratories;
- the reconstructed air defence radars and missile batteries which hinder routine operations like American U2 reconnaissance flights;
- prestigious military installations like Republican Guard

headquarters which help to bolster Saddam's standing within his ruthless military regime.

For air attacks to make sense — unless by some brilliant stroke of military intelligence, or simple chance, a bomb was landed on the bunker where Saddam was hiding — their impact must outweigh both the damage done to the UN control regime and the political backlash that will be felt from other Gulf states when more of their fellow Arabs fall innocent victim to the inevitable "collateral damage". Beyond that, the strikes should at least bring the Iraqi dictator's downfall nearer.

This is an extremely tall order, even if the Americans have developed some clever new bunker-busting bombs.

There is no evidence, admittedly, that either the Pentagon or the Ministry of Defence have positively advised against renewed air strikes. Some of the US commanders will surely relish another chance to show what their hi-tech weaponry can do. But military analysts admit that the case for strikes is nowhere near as strong as it still is launched at large, easily identifiable chunks of Saddam's nuclear programme.

So when Clinton and Blair

say for the umpteenth time that military action will only be used as a last resort, they probably mean it. Their brinkmanship contains a large element of calculated military bluff and political desperation.

Neither government has declared any aim except to force Saddam to comply with UN weapons inspections. "We're not in the business of overthrowing Saddam Hussein — that will be the job for his people," the defence secretary, George Robertson said on Sunday. Exactly how he did not explain.

While public attention has been focussed on the allies' military preparations, surprisingly little thought seems to have been given to the likely political effect of new air strikes on one of the world's most brutal and impenetrable regimes.

Yet Iraqi opposition groups, Middle East analysts, and some government officials, all warn this that is a mistake likely to lead to a re-run of what happened in 1991: a powerful but incomplete military blow followed by the re-consolidation in power of a vengeful and chemical warfare units joined the ranks of defectors.

In a brutal regime like Iraq, no open opposition is possible. Executions, arrests and tor-

ture are part of daily life, informers are everywhere.

"People know that if they take action and they're wrong they are going to get butchered," said one expert. "The problem from an opposition point of view is that people would only climb onto the bandwagon once they are sure it's going to run Saddam over."

Ahmed, exiled groups are divided and weak. The two main Kurdish factions in the north are at loggerheads, vying for Saddam's favour, their CIA links exposed and their territory useless as a base for anti-regime operations.

But Saddam's enemies are united on one vital point: conspicuously ignored by the US and Britain: that explicit support for overthrowing the Iraqi leader is the only key that would unlock the door to wider resistance.

Encouraging Iraqis ideas for encouraging Iraqis include:

- declaring Saddam a war criminal;
- recognising a provisional Iraqi government formed by the Iraqi opposition;
- unfreezing hundreds of millions of dollars of Iraqi assets abroad.

Restricting Saddam's forces by setting up a "no-drive zone" — a ground equiv-

alent to the current no-fly zones — or extending the flight ban to cover the entire country.

"Everyone says Saddam is boxed in," said Dr Chalabi. "But it is the Americans and British who are boxed in by their refusal to support the idea of political change in Iraq. The consequences of that are disastrous. People should read Clausewitz. War is policy by other means. But what is the policy here?"

As the military await a political decision, they are fine-tuning their contingency plans. In these days of digital satellite communications this can be co-ordinated from a remote US command centre in Tampa, Florida, and on the British side, from the deep bunker at Northwood, near London, which houses our permanent joint force headquarters.

The earliest date for the onset of hostilities is still a week or two away. The final planning cycle for a complex series of air strike "packages" would normally take 72 hours, and many diplomatic clearances must first be obtained. Much of the allied air forces (including the RAF's Tornado reconnaissance bombers) are currently based in Saudi Arabia, but

given Riyadh's reservations, they may have to be moved to Kuwait before they can go into action.

The main reason both the US and Britain decided to deploy aircraft carriers in the Gulf — in our case by rushing HMS *Invincible* back across the Atlantic — is that raids can if necessary be launched without obtaining anybody else's permission, a point that will not have been lost on Saddam.

IF LONDON finally approves the strikes, our aircraft will be placed under the tactical control of the local US commander. But the British chain of command will retain an ultimate veto over the choice of targets, and the way its own aircraft are employed, just as it did on the Gulf war. The British government could change its mind "right up to the eleventh hour", a senior military source emphasised yesterday.

In a further move to enhance Britain's freedom of manoeuvre, additional, hurriedly purchased laser guidance pods were being rushed out to the Gulf at the weekend to equip the RAF GR7 Harriers aboard *Invincible*, so they can bomb without relying on US aircraft to illuminate their

targets. If the wrong targets are hit, or innocent civilians killed, there will be no embarrassing arguments about which nation was responsible.

These infra-red "Hild" guidance pods are already available to the RAF Tornados patrolling the Iraqi no-fly zone from Al-Kharg, the Saudi airfield near Riyadh where most of the US Air Force aircraft are also based. To begin with the pods were used for medium level reconnaissance, where there was a rare gap in the US inventory.

Good quality tactical air reconnaissance is still just about the only military capability Britain can offer the United States which its own forces could not provide as well or better.

The hard fact is that in this campaign, the loyal Brits are politically valuable but militarily irrelevant.

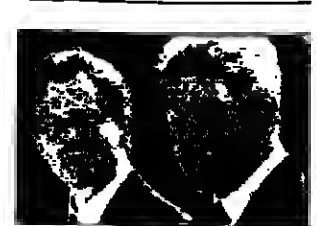
Graphics sources: United States Central Command; Ministry of Defence; the US Eglin Air Force Base, Florida; The Military Balance 1996/7.

Graphics: Paddy Allen; Steve Villers.

Research: Mark Espiner.

David Fairhall is the Guardian's defence correspondent; Ian Black is our diplomatic editor.

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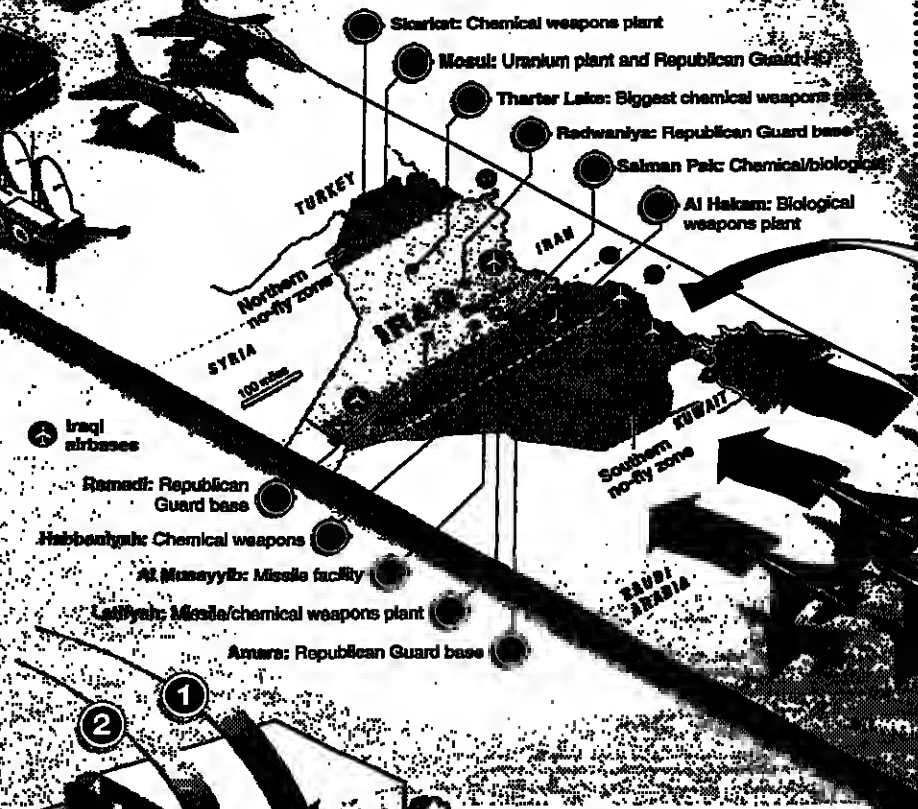
The special illusionship
9

Show of strength

Iraqi forces

The only Iraqi forces that make sense as targets are the allied air strikes — are the Iraqi ground forces and other air defenses which threaten the allied air forces.

Possible allied targets



Even 'smarter' weapons

United States military has spent huge amounts of money trying to perfect "bunker-busting" weapons. Much of Iraq's military infrastructure and weapons-manufacturing capacity remained intact at the end of the last Gulf war — buried deep in underground bunkers. Determined that any further strikes should be more effective, they have developed a range of new missiles including:

- 1 Advanced Utility Penetrators**
Explosives are put inside thicker, smaller shell cases to greatly increase their penetrative power. Some can pass through 10 feet of steel-reinforced concrete before exploding on the other side. The Pentagon claims to have developed shells that will explode and contain chemical/biological targets.
- 2 Hard Target Smart Bombs**
Deep-penetrating bombs that can count the number of walls or voids through which they pass before detonating. If intelligence is adequate, rooms deep within bunkers can be targeted.

Best-laid plans...

However accurate the new breed of weapons might be, some are bound to go astray. During the last Gulf war many smart bombs went astray, some soon off course by high winds. Any errors when targeting chemical/biological weapons sites could have grave consequences for Iraq civilians.

Allied forces in the Gulf

UK Forces

- 1 Aircraft Carrier (HMS *Invincible* will be replaced by HMS *Illustrious* in March)
- 7 GR7 Harriers
- 7 Sea Harriers
- 1 Frigate
- 1 Destroyer
- 1 Royal Fleet Auxiliary support ship
- 6 Tornados in Saudi Arabia
- 6 Tornados in Turkey



US Forces

- 3 Aircraft Carriers (A carrier's aircraft deploy a powerful array of weapons including laser-guided bombs, HARM, Maverick, Walleyes, Shrike and SLAM missiles. US surface warships and submarines can launch cruise missiles.)
- 2 Cruisers
- 2 Guided Missile Frigates
- 2 Attack Submarines
- 1 Fast Combat Support Ship
- 2 Mine Countermeasures Ships
- 162 Aircraft
- 29,000 Sailors and Marines

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Tomorrow: The picture from BSKyB

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FinanceGuardian

Motor firms in double jobs boost

Nicholas Barnister, Chief Business Correspondent

BITAIN'S motor industry received a double boost yesterday when Land Rover announced the creation of 1,200 jobs in its dealership network and Ford confirmed it would make its baby Jaguar sports car at Halewood, securing at least 2,900 jobs at the Merseyside plant.

Land Rover dealers are spending £122 million setting up 12 sales centres and improving facilities at the 123 existing ones. Some of the additional staff are needed to handle sales of the recently-launched Freelander model. Land Rover, which sold 127,000 vehicles last year, is expecting to sell 60,000 Freelanders this year.

The company, part of BMW's Rover subsidiary, is also understood to be gearing up to launch a new version of its Discovery model later this year.

Rover last month announced the creation of 400 jobs at its Land Rover plant in Solihull, partly to allow round-the-clock production of the Freelander.



Tony Blair, flanked by Margaret Beckett and Nick Scheele, Jaguar's chairman, yesterday confirm that Halewood has been saved. PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN DEMPSEY

News of the Land Rover expansion came as Tony Blair confirmed that the Government had agreed to grant £43 million to Jaguar, which is planning to produce its new X400 sports car at the Ford plant at Halewood.

Margaret Beckett, the Trade and Industry Secretary, said the grant ensured that the new car would be

built in Britain. Ford, which owns Jaguar, had threatened to build the car at one of its German or American plants unless it got adequate government funding. Jaguar's chairman, Nick Scheele, said the money was needed to cover the cost of converting Halewood to handle luxury car production.

Halewood is currently

making the old Escort, production of which is due to be phased out.

Early designs for the X400 are said to be reminiscent of the Jaguar Mk 2, but the final version is unlikely to go on show until 2001, shortly before it goes on sale.

Mr Scheele said initial production would be about 100,000 a year, creating

about £380 million a year of business for British component suppliers.

In an unexpected about-turn, the Government is to contribute £123 million towards British Aerospace's development costs for two new Airbuses, following lobbying from the company.

The deal will secure 2,000 jobs at the group's plants at

Filton, near Bristol, and Chester.

The money is being provided as a launch aid — repayable with interest and additional payments if the aircraft are a success, but at risk if the project flops. It will go towards developing wings for new versions of the four-engined Airbus A340, which will compete with the Boeing 777.

Notebook

Blending drugs may be unhealthy



Edited by Alex Brummer

THE timing of the Glaxo and SmithKline Beecham drugs mega-merger could not have been better for equity markets on both sides of the Atlantic. It has stepped into the vacuum just as the stock market fundamentals of higher earnings, on the back of strong economic growth, were fading because of the Asian crisis.

It would be difficult to over-emphasise the importance of the £100 billion or so get-together. Not just because it will create a supercharged giant in the ethical pharmaceutical industry, ahead of European and American rivals, but because it means that now any financial deal looks possible.

To put the matter in perspective, this prospective drugs merger will create a unit bigger than if IBM joined forces with Microsoft.

For stock markets recently fed on a diet of gloom it offers real hope. Now any merger speculation has resonance, which is why the FTSE 100 finished in record territory last night at 5930 after a 140 rise, and why Wall Street has been rising just as fast.

But does this really make so much sense? The pharmaceutical industry is a one-off. Even though a combined Glaxo/SKB will be the world's largest corporation, it will not have a dominant market position. In the drugs industry, market share is so dispersed — the new company will have 7.5 per cent of global markets — anti-trust issues (raised in multimedia and banking) do not arise.

A combination of Barclays and NatWest, for instance, would mean that, in the small business area, the new bank would have a 50 per cent share. In the pharmaceuticals market, except for some limited drug groups for asthma and migraine, that potential is absent. Once the patents run out, as Glaxo learnt with Zantac, almost anyone can pile in.

The critical questions about Glaxo/SKB relate to the nature of research and development. The wisdom has been that a cluster of excellence, represented by the UK's world-class pharmaceutical companies, has encouraged ever higher performance through competition. If cost-cutting takes out that element of the success story, then Glaxo/SKB should be blocked on public interest grounds.

Taylor's targets

HAVING taken the strategic decision to step back from investment banking, Barclays has at least cleared the decks speedily. But this has been a costly and badly handled exit which has

cost shareholders about £88 million in write-offs and losses, and seriously damaged Martin Taylor's reputation as a clearing banker who would not make the same mistakes of his predecessors.

It could be argued that Barclays' exit was timely. The Asian crisis, the US derivatives losses, and the oncoming slowdown in the Western economies, will make the future more difficult for investment banking.

But the whole episode could be turned on its head if Barclays had chosen to invest the £88 million of shareholders' money it has actually wasted in the ongoing business. What if it had taken a longer-term view and, instead of liberally distributing cash to shareholders in the good year, given BZW the information technology and other facilities that it needed to be a world-class player? Perhaps, then, it could have avoided this embarrassment.

By counting the cost now, rather than waiting until its full financial results come out on February 17, Barclays plainly hopes to focus attention on the stronger underlying performance in the remainder of its business — including Barclays Capital (largely saved from BZW) whose profits were up to £248 million from £201 million.

But what the market is really waiting for is Mr Taylor's big move: having off-loaded a troubled business he needs to convince investors he has some other fine arrows in his quiver.

Share codes

LAST year's building society conversions helped to achieve a goal that Mrs Thatcher aspired to but never achieved, despite her privatisation revolution. It increased the number of private shareholders in Britain, from all walks of life, to more than 15 million.

The outcome has been a broader public interest in what happens on the stock market, than has ever been the case. For some Guardian readers, the Prices Page with its authoritative market report written by Ian King (last year's top shareholder among the national newspaper writers), and the share prices service is where they turn first.

But we also have been aware of the limitations. In the space provided it is impossible to cover every quoted company, investment trust or other vehicle. So we have been struggling with the idea of providing a better service to readers which will provide them with on-line access to share prices, investment and yield information, and even track a customised share portfolio.

Every Tuesday, beginning today, share price codes will be printed against each stock quoted in the Guardian. This together with the Guardian's interactive booklet, available free on 0800 555 700, will provide every reader of this newspaper with a new, low-cost gateway to share prices and investment. Use it to manage your portfolio better — and enjoy.

Bid fever lifts FTSE £25bn

THE BIG MERGER

Glaxo
SKB

Ian King

LONDON'S stock market blasted to a new high for the fourth time in as many days yesterday as news of the planned

record-breaking £117 billion merger between Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham fuelled speculation of more corporate action.

As executives from both companies prepared to meet union representatives today over speculation that 10,000 jobs will be lost if the merger goes ahead, global markets were alive with the prospect of further takeovers in the drugs, banking, insurance and telecom sectors.

The boards of Glaxo and SmithKline are expected to start detailed talks today in what some analysts predict could be a drive to cut costs at the combined group by up to £1.5 billion a year.

Financial advisers to the two sides were locked in talks

all yesterday as senior managers attempted to reassure employees about the scale of job losses and site closures.

The market needed no such comfort, however, and the planned merger saw the FTSE 100 index of Britain's highest companies jump by more than 145 points in the first few minutes of trading, smashing through the 5600 mark at one point, before ending a busy session up 140.5 points at 5599.0.

The move, which means the index is worth nearly 8 per cent more than at the start of the year, added £24.9 billion to the Footsie's value.

SmithKline and Glaxo each saw increases of almost 20 per cent each, while smaller drug rivals Nycomed Amersham

and Zeneca also saw sharp rises in their share price.

Glaxo shares leapt 340p to 1.968p and SmithKline shares rose 65p to 841½p — valuing Glaxo at £70 billion and SKB at £47 billion.

The rise in value means that a merged group would lead Royal Dutch Shell to become the world's second biggest company, behind General Electric of the US.

Meanwhile, shares in British Telecom also jumped sharply, amid rumours that BT was to reopen merger talks with Cable & Wireless.

Similarly, a clutch of banking and insurance stocks saw big rises, with HSBC — which owns Midland Bank — Royal Bank of Scotland, Standard Chartered and General Accl-

ent moving sharply higher on merger speculation and a strong overnight showing by the Hong Kong market.

City analysts said there was no reason why the market could not continue rising, given the huge amounts of cash available for investment from financial institutions.

Nick Knight, equities strategist at investment bank Nomura, who described yesterday's market moves as "awesome", reflected that Britain was on the point of moving into a "Goldilocks" — not too hot, not too cold — economic environment, similar to that of the US.

He said: "Anyone who had been thinking the market was looking overvalued is now, frankly, embarrassed."

Some brokers now see the Footsie as meaningless as a barometer of corporate health because of the way it is dominated by a handful of pharmaceutical and financial stocks.

However, Philip Wolstencroft, strategist at US-owned broker Merrill Lynch, which accounts for one in four shares traded on the London market — insisted the index was still an important indicator of activity.

Mr Wolstencroft — who expects the Footsie to be at 6000 by the end of the year — said: "Glaxo, SmithKline and Zeneca have all seen their market values increase by billions today, and that's obviously more important than what happens in the small-caps sector."

Costs drive riders on the global carousel

Mark Miller

THE latest spin in the pharmaceutical industry's merger merry-go-round will turn the competitive screws on Europe's drugmakers.

The planned combination of Britain's Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham will leave Europe's pharmaceutical groups with just two choices, says Gerrit Jost, pharmaceutical analyst at Commerzbank in Frankfurt.

"There are two ways to go. One is to try to be a global player but a lot of smaller companies will have to specialise in areas where margins are higher." He adds that the pressure to grow will be most intense among the biggest firms.

The snag is that none of Europe's most important drugmakers are stand-alone companies and three are part of the triumvirate of big German chemical companies, Hoechst, BASF and Bayer. So far all three have abandoned the idea of stock market flotations of their pharmaceutical interests.

Higher on drugs

Zeneca	↑ 10.0%
Hoechst	↑ 8.4%
Pharmacia & Upjohn	↑ 7.3%
Schering	↑ 6.3%
Astra	↑ 5.7%
Novo Nordisk	↑ 3.1%
Akzo Nobel	↑ 2.7%
Roche Holdings	↑ 1.0%

Pharmaceutical share price rises yesterday

One criticism aimed at the German groups is that they are short of new and innovative drugs in the pipeline. That adds to the pressures for expansion, particularly at Bayer.

One group rubbing its hands in response to the stock market reaction to the proposed Glaxo Wellcome-SKB merger, is France's Rhône-Poulenc, which announced plans last year to float its pharmaceuticals business Rhône-Poulenc Rorer. Last week it said the move was expected to take place later this year.

Switzerland already has ex-

perience of hefty mergers with the marriage of Sandoz and Ciba Geigy to form Novartis, seen as having the financial muscle to make a big acquisition.

The drive towards consolidation is not simply a question of big is better. Drug companies are under increasing pressure from cost-conscious customers. Governments, alarmed at the rising cost of health care as citizens live longer, have sought to squeeze suppliers. The costs of getting new drugs to the market are rising, yet they may have less time in which to reward their inventors.

Robin Campbell at Paribas, however, argues that while cost-cutting drove the previous wave of mergers in the industry in the late 1980s, more recent moves are being spurred on by the need to come up with new drugs, especially for the US market. Though mergers have been a popular response to the competitive pressures, the jury is out as to whether it is the most effective.

According to a study by McKinsey & Co, the savings generated tend to be the equivalent of between 10 and 30 per cent of the smaller partners' cost base. But another management consultancy, AT Kearney, has calculated that those companies which have been part of the mergers in the pharmaceutical industry over the last decade "have generally had lower economic returns".

That is not a message the stock markets are in a mood to hear. Pharmaceutical companies have been part of their share price soar yesterday with several registering double digit improvements on the back of the Glaxo Wellcome-SKB talks.

A tiddler among the titans benefits from speculation

Ian King

ZENECA, Britain's third-smallest drugs company, has been a bid candidate almost since it was demerged from ICI, in May 1993. Yesterday, Zeneca shares leapt 235p to 2680p, valuing it at £25.4 billion, as traders scrambled for stock in the first session following news of the Glaxo/SmithKline talks.

That puts the shares at a value of over 30 times their prospective earnings for 1998 and nearly twice the average rating for companies in the FTSE-All Share index.

Zeneca is in play for one reason — it is relatively small compared with titans like Glaxo-SmithKline and Hoechst. Accordingly, analysts have speculated about a number of possible merger partners or bidders over the past few years, with Switzerland's

Roche and Sweden's Astra frequently mentioned.

Behind the takeover froth, Zeneca offers plenty of attractions to a partner, not least its formidable product portfolio. Apart from the cardiovascular range Zestril, migraine treatment Zomig and schizophrenia drug Seroquel, Zeneca has won plaudits for its cancer drugs Zoladex and Nolvadex, which were launched on the innovative premise that patients could live with cancer, given the right treatment.

Other products owned by Zeneca include Quora, the fungal-based meat alternative, and an array of pesticides and fungicides.

Zeneca's weak spot, though, is that its size prevents it spending as much on research and development as its larger rivals. Indeed, just before Christmas, it announced plans to double research output to counter City critics.

Mr Weetman is one of the most senior people at Reuters and was formerly in charge of the whole of the agency's Asian operation. Reuters has hired independent lawyers in New York, the firm of Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz — to conduct an investigation.

Shares in the company dropped another 3p yesterday, ending at 512p. A week ago they were around 615p.

Reuters sends agent to unravel Bloomberg mystery

Dan Atkinson

ATOP-LEVEL troubleshooter from Reuters, the international news agency, has been despatched to untangle events at the US subsidiary which is believed to be at the centre of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The company said it was frustrated by the absence of any specific charges relating

to alleged theft of information from rival Bloomberg. US reports suggested that the FBI's computer crimes unit was pursuing a former Bloomberg employee alleged to have sold the stolen information to Reuters.

Meanwhile, the US Attorney's Office in New York would neither confirm nor deny that an inquiry was under way or that a federal grand jury was investigating. Prosecutors are said to

have seized 100 documents from the offices of Reuters Analytics, an offshoot based in Stamford, Connecticut, specialising in developing products for gathering and analysing financial information in the pits and bouds area — one of Bloomberg's great strengths.

The documents are said to include communications between Reuters Analytics and the consulting company alleged to have been hired to

steal data from Bloomberg. They include memos and other requests for detailed information about technical programmes for analysing investments, according to The New York Times yesterday.

The consultant was believed to have broken into Bloomberg's computers to obtain the information and give it to Reuters. Although the consulting company was not identified, it is also based in Stamford and was said to be

founded by a former Bloomberg employee, the paper reported.

Three executives from Reuters Analytics have been put on paid leave, but the agency would not identify them.

Reuters HQ in London said yesterday: "Reuters is frustrated. It does not know the details of the allegation. We take this issue extremely seriously. We have sent to Stamford... a member of the executive committee, Geoffrey

Weetman, to supervise the on-going operation."

Mr Weetman is one of the most senior people at Reuters and was formerly in charge of the whole of the agency's Asian operation. Reuters has hired independent lawyers in New York, the firm of Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz — to conduct an investigation.

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Lingerie group stops drooping as bid talks hoist shares

Tony May

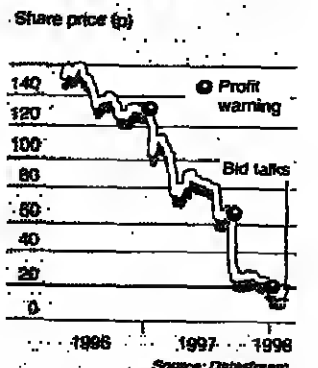
SHARES in La Senza jumped 50 per cent to 251p yesterday after the assiduous underwear group confirmed it was in bid talks with "a number of parties".

These are believed to include Ann Summers, the privately-owned sex aids and lingerie group.

Shareholders in La Senza, which is 60 per cent owned by the Canadian women's clothing retailer Sissy Shale, must be relieved having seen shares plunge from the 1996 AIM flotation rate 20 months ago, to as little as 15p.

City analysts said that while management had failed, a successful bid could be pitched as high as 40p.

La Senza



Source: Citicorrupt

cause of the good position of the group's products and store locations.

When La Senza floated it planned a five-year expansion from 22 stores to 152, with the aim of attacking Marks & Spencers' near 40 per cent share of the £1.2 billion-a-year market. But the shares turned down despite a retail boom and a record haul stock market.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.228	France 9.733	Italy 2.891	Singapore 2.75
Austria 26.47	Germany 2.508	Malta 0.634	South Africa 7.94
Belgium 60.02	Greece 483.36	Netherlands 3.267	Spain 245.39
Canada 2.315	Hong Kong 12.27	New Zealand 2.70	Sweden 13.00
Cyprus 0.855	India 63.47	Norway 12.08	Switzerland 2.35
Denmark 11.16	Ireland 1.161	Portugal 297.00	Turkey 240.740
Finland 8.897	Israel 5.88	Saudi Arabia 6.02	USA 1.596

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

English
in the
hunt for
label

Rugby Union

England put pace before strategy

Robert Armstrong fears that Woodward's selection for Paris could well self-destruct

ENGLAND have taken a major gamble with a number of potentially self-destructive selections as they set off in pursuit of their first win in six Nations matches in Saturday's Five Nations opener against France in Paris.

Although the coach Clive Woodward has the final say in team matters, his latest line-up is unconvincing and smacks of the bad old days of selection by RFU committee when England made a habit of coming second.

Players have been picked out of position while others have been dropped without good reason for a game that England badly need to win to have a realistic chance of regaining the Five Nations title.

The modish obsession with raw pace at the expense of an effective strategy offers more hostages to fortune than England's creaky defence can safely accommodate.

Mike Catt, a fly-half, has been chosen at full-back; Austin Healey, now recognised as a scrum-half, gets another cap on the wing; and Richard Hill, an open-side, is picked at No. 8. England include two open-sides with Neil Back keeping his place at No. 7, a position the captain Lawrence Dallaglio used to occupy before he

settled for the blind-side job. Jeremy Guscott, who has played only two games this season, returns at centre after a back injury despite looking short of match fitness. Bath's European Cup tri-umph, Mark Regan, whose line-out throws these days find the opposition with unerring accuracy, returns at hooker, a decision forced on Woodward by Richard Cock-erill's knee injury.

There is no place for the Bath full-back Matt Perry nor the centre team-mate Phil de Glanville, who both per-formed honourably in the 26-26 draw with New Zealand before Christmas. Tim Rodber, a mainstay of last summer's Lions success in South Africa, is again over-looked at No. 8, despite his compelling form for Northampton.

Likewise Danny Grewcock of Saracens is unlucky to miss out on a second-row berth, while the veteran prop Jason Leonard, who recently complained of burn-out, remains in the front row.

Woodward appeared to concede that Guscott might not last the full 80 minutes at Stade de France, frost permitting. "I genuinely think Jerry is match fit but we don't think he is we can change things," he said. "Jerry is a genuine out-side-centre and Mike Catt is

England team

1 J. Leavelle (Leicester)	2 M. Regan (Bath)	3 R. Hill (Leicester)
4 M. Catt (Leicester)	5 G. Guscott (Leicester)	6 D. Grewcock (Saracens)
7 N. Back (Leicester)	8 M. Regan (Bath)	9 R. Hill (Leicester)
10 M. Catt (Leicester)	11 A. Healey (Leicester)	12 J. Guscott (Leicester)
13 M. Catt (Leicester)	14 M. Catt (Leicester)	15 M. Catt (Leicester)

Replacements (from): M. Perry (Bath), P. de Glanville (Bath), M. Dwyer (Northampton), G. Rowntree (Leicester), D. West (Leicester), D. Grewcock (Saracens), T. Rodber (Northampton), T. Diprose (Saracens).

Stade de France, Paris, Saturday 2.0

Perry suffers meltdown

Robert Kitson on a bad six days for the golden boy dropped by Bath and England

A BUMPY landing for the golden boy. Dropped twice in the space of six days by club and country, Matt Perry now knows what it feels like when high-flying youth strays too close to the sun and the wax wings start to melt.

Last week he had the pain of missing out to the eventual match-winner Jon Callard for Bath's European final against Brive; yesterday England pulled Mike Catt out of the hat at full-back to face France in a desperate bid to complete his sudden descent.

Perry had barely any time to celebrate his 21st birthday last Tuesday, but the anniversary has brought him no income, did little wrong and much more right again as the All Blacks at Twickenham, earning his coach praise for having the courage of his selectorial convictions. Fat good it's done Perry.

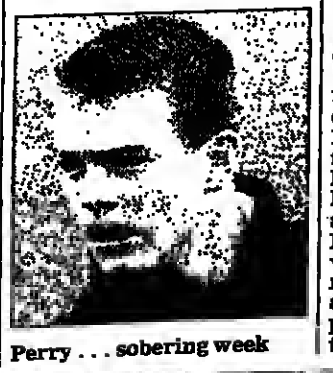
Perry is taking it on the chin. "The worst thing you can do is get down about it," he said. "It is disappointing, though, because I was looking forward to playing in the Five Nations."

Woodward did little to soften the landing. "It was a difficult decision. I didn't expect him to be jumping up and down about it but he took it fine. He's obviously disappointed but that's what it's all about. He'll be bigger for it," said the England coach.

Perry has already seen at first hand the misfortune of his former teammate Andy Long, picked in the front row against Australia last autumn only to suffer a drastic freefall down the rankings scarcely softened by the captaincy of the England Under-21 team this Friday. Against Brive, Long was not even on the bench and the climb back may take some time.

Perhaps he and Perry should have foreseen it all. We tend to romanticise the English boy wonders, concerned lest they develop the tell-tale symptoms of complacency too early.

Look no further than Perry's one-time schoolboy wing partner, team-mate Ben Hoolioke, lauded for laying the Aussies all over Lord's last summer but having to be content with an A team spot this winter. Perry can at least look forward to a seat on the replacements bench and, according to Woodward, a probable walk-on role in the big picture.



Perry... sobering week

Ice Hockey

High-flying Eagles two steps nearer a unique grand slam

Vic Batchelder

THE fortunes of Ayr Scottish Eagles soared over the weekend when after Saturday's 7-0 victory at Basingstoke and a 1-0 win in Cardiff on Sunday, they beat their two of their closest rivals to lose key players at a critical stage of the season.

Eagles, who need only four points from four games to clinch the Superleague title, are on course for all four grand slam of all four national competitions in one season, having already won the B & H Cup, Two Defunct clubs, Durham and Dundee, won three trophies back in the old British League, but the old titles have not been at stake before.

Vince Boe's 13th-minute goal in Cardiff took the Eagles seven points clear of Manchester Storm, who have a game in hand but can no longer call on their second-

Sailing

Record 16 for America's Cup

Bob Fisher

A RECORD number of 16 challenges for the America's Cup have been confirmed by the payment by each of a \$250,000 (\$150,000) bond.

They are from 10 nations; six are from the United States, two from France and one each from Spain, Italy, Hong Kong, Russia, Australia, Japan, Korea, and Britain, whose challenge is through the Royal Dorset Yacht Club of Weymouth. The challenger selection trials begin in October, 1999.

Tracy Edwards and her 10-woman crew left Humber yesterday en route for Ushant in Brittany where today they begin an attempt on the Jules Verne Trophy for the fastest circumnavigation of the globe in the 92ft catamaran Royal & Sun Alliance.



Bye bye... Mark Ramprakash, centre, expected a leading role but finds himself among the extras

Ramprakash out in the cold

Mike Selvey in Port of Spain believes the Middlesex captain is being ignored by Mike Atherton and that the tour party is split

WHEN last Thursday morning Mark Butcher trudged back to the Sabina Park pavilion after punching away to third slip a delivery from Courtney Walsh that threatened to rip out his larynx, he might have considered himself unlucky on several counts.

Despite the fact that he had not batted competitively since his final innings of last season for Surrey on September 20, he had been expected, in the aftermath of Jack Russell's gastric illness, to go in first wicket down on a mine-field against a brace of pace bowlers with 600-odd Test wickets between them.

It has to be asked why he was playing at all when the form that he had shown in practice had not remotely matched that of Mark Ramprakash.

The case of Ramprakash is mystifying. After his poor tour of South Africa three winters ago, his England career appeared in jeopardy. Although his talent was not in question, there were doubts about his ability to translate his game to the international arena.

But high-class form for Middlesex and a maturing personality persuaded more enlightened selectors to allow him back into the team. With-out his runs in the second innings of the final Test against Australia at The Oval last season, England would not have won the game and Atherton would not be captain.

On the back of that, he might reasonably have expected to be playing in the first game of the tour against Sri Lanka at the end of the month. The prospect of keeping his place. So his awkwardness and disappointment can only be imagined when it became apparent that John Crawley, albeit down the order at No. 5, and Adam Hoolioke (not to mention Butcher) had jumped the queue.

What happened between The Oval and the Caribbean smacks of the captain's autocracy on tour. For last summer's home Tests neither Mike Atherton nor David Lloyd had a selectorial vote, although they would have had some input. Here the situation is the reverse, with teams chosen by captain, vice-captain and coach.

The implication is that Atherton, who has scarcely demonstrated confidence in Ramprakash in the past, is overriding the selectors' views. He is also making a statement, effectively saying that Ramprakash is the touring party against his better judgement and that the chances of him playing a part are slim.

Two of the three home selectors, Mike Gatting and Graham Gooch, who are with the A team, are spitting nails with the phone lines between

Cricket

Tour match Trinidad v England XI

Croft plan goes clang

ROBERT CROFT's mission to bowl himself into the second of the two Parts of Spala Tests was not a complete success at Guayra Park yesterday. The sound of the Trinidad batsman Lincoln Roberts hoisting a ball from Croft with a clang on to the corrugated-iron roof of a local sports club was hardly music to the ears of the Glamorgan off-spinner, who remained wicketless after 21 overs that cost 71 runs.

That six signalled the end of his third spell and when Andy Caddick replaced the Welshman at the Oil Refinery end he immediately broke a stand of 105 between Roberts and Phil Simmons, who had held up England's progress since before lunch.

There is the irony evolving that Croft might squeeze his way into the second of the back-to-back Tests at Queen's Park Oval if the adjacent pitch becomes scuffed up by the movement of players during the hastily-arranged initial Test there, starting on Thursday.

Instead the front-line pacemen proved the more successful, with Caddick claiming three for 38, Dean Headley two for 34 and Angus Fraser seven wickets for 29. Gooch, with his second ball, Roberts had made 60 when he drove at Caddick and Graham Thorpe clung on to a splendid catch at first slip with the ball almost past him. With Simmons he had detained England for 31 overs after Trinidad found themselves struggling at 82 for five and technically in danger of being asked to follow on.

ENGLAND First innings (Tues, first day, 26-6)

1 M. Selvey	2 M. Ramprakash	3 M. Gatting	4 M. Gooch	5 A. Hoolioke	6 J. Crawley	7 M. Butcher	8 M. Caddick	9 P. Simmons	10 D. Lloyd	11 R. Croft
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Total (10 overs): 85

Second innings (Wed, first day, 27-6)

1 R. Croft	2 P. Simmons	3 M. Caddick	4 M. Gatting	5 M. Gooch	6 J. Crawley	7 M. Butcher	8 M. Ramprakash	9 M. Selvey	10 D. Lloyd	11 A. Hoolioke
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Total (10 overs): 115

Sri Lanka v England A: First Test, third day

No satisfaction on feather bed

David Hopps in Kurumegala

THE Kama Sutra film may be the current attraction at the Imperial Theatre here but down the road at the Weligedera Stadium there is only one position to choose from, and that is a certain draw.

After three days of this four-day match, Sri Lanka A have answered England A's 385 with 341 for eight, and if the spectators are close to cracking up with boredom, the pitch undoubtedly is not. Refusing to take its cue from the Kama Sutra, all it has done is roll over and go to sleep.

All eight A Tests between the two countries in the past decade have finished in draws and a ninth seems inevitable. When Ranjit Fernando, Sri Lanka's team manager, was asked in mid-afternoon if his side might declare before lunch, he threw the game open, his laughter was so uproarious that a young orange seller was almost startled into dropping his basket down a grassy bank.

England had imagined that, once the ball began to turn, dismissing the Sri Lankans would be more like peeling a satsuma, one breakthrough and everything would fall apart. But the two left-arm spinners, Ashley Giles and Dean Cosker, had a frustrating day and, apart from a brief flurry after lunch, were never bowled in tandem.

Giles delivered 33 of England's 90 overs yesterday without taking a wicket, his greatest threat being a quicker ball delivered at starting speed. He was frustrated by several batsmen and leg-before appeals that were turned down but, in giving only the obvious, the umpires have at least been scrupulously consistent.

Cosker was limited to 12 overs. With his rolling, stiff-legged gait and trousers billowing in the fresh breeze, which every afternoon has rushed

Australia v S Africa: Third Test, fourth day

Kirsten gets his name on the wall

Andy Wilson in Adelaide

GARY KIRSTEN's stylish century yesterday was significant for a number of reasons. The left-handed opener had already made five Test centuries but this was his first against Australia on possibly his last visit, and it came at the brisk tempo South Africa needed to give themselves a chance of squaring the series.

The innings also saved Kirsten A\$1,000 (about £400) by earning him a place on one of the honours boards which bedeck the walls of the Adelaide Oval's Chappell Bar and Bradman Room, listing players who have scored centuries or taken five wickets here. At the start of play he had stood to lose a bet with Shaun Pollock after the young paceman's seven-wicket haul on Sunday.

Kirsten's feat followed Mark Taylor's historic effort for Australia, which ended earlier with him carrying his hat for 189 after his last-wicket partner Stuart MacGill was dismissed in the day's 11th over.

How a third left-handed opener, Matt Elliott, must envy the centuries. In the 17 overs possible after South Africa's second-innings declaration on 193 for six, the Victorian suffered his fifth failure of the series.

Taylor chopped on to his stumps shortly afterwards and at 32 for two Australia were left with an uphill fifth-day fight to preserve their 1-0 series lead.

At tea, with the score on 144 for two and the lead 311 runs, the tourists' captain Hansie Cronje looked well-placed to declare early. But he soon lobbed a catch to Shane Warne at mid-on and, with the debutant leg-spinner MacGill then tak-

Tennis

Henman rues hard fall on Split carpet

Richard Jago

TIM HENMAN, bruised on the hard Australian courts and hoping for a good run on Croatian carpet, suffered another demoralising setback yesterday when he was beaten 6-3, 1-6, 6-3 by Germany's Rainer Schuttler in the first round of an ATP indoor tournament in Split.

Schuttler is ranked only 118 in the world so this was the second consecutive defeat for an opponent outside the top 100 for Henman, who had managed to gain a wild card here after his first-round exit in Melbourne.

Once again his second serve let him down. He won less than half of the points on it and a poor start led him into increasing uncertainty whether to play more conservatively or assertively.

"You lose confidence with results like this," admitted the British No. 2. "It's a very frustrating time. I've played indoors enough to know the way to play, but in the third set I played too cautiously."

"But this defeat does not make me a bad player. Like a soccer player who is not scoring goals you lose confidence in your form, but I will always have confidence in my ability."

Greg Rusedski, an another wild card hoping to make up for disappointments in Australia, has been made the top seed for this tournament. His first opponent will be Gianluca Pozzi of Italy, a fellow left-hander who recently rejoined the top 100 after bone surgery in his right leg.

Rusedski slipped two places to No. 8 in yesterday's world rankings after being overtaken by Petr Korda and Marcelo Rios, the Australian Open winner and runner-up respectively. In the quarter-finals the British No. 1 could meet the Dutch left-hander Jan Siemerink, who beat him in Stockholm in December.

IAAF cash injection for Britain, page 13

Woodward's high-risk strategy, page 15

Owen gets his England chance, page 14

Ramprakash out in the cold, page 15

SportsGuardian

England's standard-bearers return to the colours



Back on centre stage

Jeremy Guscott, left, will return the England rugby union team for their Five Nations opener, icy pitch permitting, in Paris on Saturday while Alan Shearer, like the Bath player hit by injury this season, is in Glenn Hoddle's squad for the friendly against Chile tomorrow week at Wembley. Full stories: rugby union, page 16; football, page 14

Big freeze hits super-stadium

Jon Henley in Paris

EMBARRASSMENT is growing in Paris because the brand-new Stade de France pitch is frozen solid — and unless something dramatic can thaw it by Saturday, England will be unable to play France there in their opening Five Nations rugby union match.

The red faces came as it emerged that the high-tech

stadium, built at a cost of £270 million, was not fitted with under-soil heating. The playing surface, laid last October at a cost of £1,100 per square metre, has therefore been defenceless against the recent cold snap in France and is now rock-hard.

Designers chose not to install permanent under-soil heating so as to avoid artificial growth of the grass during the winter, explained Eric de Branche, a spokesman for

the construction consortium that owns the stadium.

"Obviously we regret this icing problem but it will be solved," he said. "We are taking all necessary steps to ensure the game can go ahead and are 100 per cent confident it will. These are teething problems. They're normal in a new venue."

England are due to arrive in Paris tomorrow afternoon, with the vast majority of their supporters in the city by Fri-

day morning. The match is already a sell-out.

After urgent consultations with the French Rugby Federation, stadium officials covered the pitch late yesterday afternoon. And from tomorrow morning a special de-icing cover will be laid over the turf and a battery of hot-air blowers will run constantly — interrupted only for training sessions — until late on the morning of the match. "The consortium asked us

to take control of this matter," said the federation's general secretary Jacky Laurans, adding that the pitch was frozen to a depth of 10cm (4in).

Eight blowers will be linked by hundreds of yards of perforated tubing from which a constant flow of warm air will circulate over the pitch beneath the heat-retaining cover, said De Branche.

"Basically, we are creating a mattress of hot air over the entire pitch that will gradually de-ice it. We are following the timetable recommended by the firm that laid the turf."

A combination of clear skies and overnight temperatures as low as -6C last month

sent a warning signal to stadium officials of potential problems in the run-up to last Wednesday's inaugural football match there, a friendly between France and Spain.

About 40 square metres of turf have already been resceded because parts of the pitch turned yellow. Environmentalists warned that the polluted soil on which the stadium was built means the grass may never be entirely healthy, but officials remain confident that the turf, which will have to withstand nine of next summer's World Cup matches including the final, will be in perfect condition by the spring.

Time to blow the whistle on foul fans



Paul Hayward

FOR me the most interesting aspect of Eric Cantona's infamous kung fu kick was not what it said about him, but what it revealed about the things some football fans think they can get away with — and frequently do.

Matthew Simmons was a foul-mouthed racist who apparently believed buying a ticket for a football match entitled him to aim all manner of abuse at anyone outside his own tribe. The one positive effect of Cantona's assault was that it disabused the untalented Simmons of that idea at least until he recovered his senses well enough to sell his story. "Off you go, Cantona," was how Simmons reported the exchange, "it's an early bath for you."

The thumping of a linesman (sorry, assistant referee) at Portsmouth on Saturday was an extension of the Matthew Simmons I've-got-my-ticket-so-I-can-do-and-say-whatever-I-want school of football supporting. It confirmed that some men's lives are so empty they can't distinguish between a load of blokes trying to get a bag of air into a giant hairnet and what's known outside of sporting arenas as real life.

Before the letters start rolling in, let's make one thing plain. Most football supporters are humane and rational people who, even if they do abuse the ref on Saturdays (which most don't), are quite normal again by the time they return home to start chopping the vegetables for dinner. The Japanese beat up effigies of their boss. We British say unspeakable things in football stadiums and behave like sad thwarted children when the three fallible people in authority don't give us exactly what we want and give it to us now.

There is a terrible romanticism in this country about what terrace culture is really like. There are those who will tell you that all that spite and bile is really just a post-modern comic caper that's supposed to be viewed ironically. Well, aren't we all drowning in irony these days? The statistics show that more fans

and women are going to football, which is helping the civilising process no end. But any dad thinking of taking a child to a match knows that sooner or later he will have to explain to his son or daughter why the Buster Bloodvessel character behind is threatening to rip the opposition left-back's arms off.

Strange that a country with such a differential tradition should come over so anti-authoritarian when a middle-aged man runs on to a football pitch with ill-fitting shorts and a whistle in his mouth. We put up with the Royal Family but we think all football refs should be guillotined. When the unloading of workday frustrations ends up with a linesman being knocked unconscious then we know that football is becoming far too serious for its own already over-inflated good.

SO where does the line fall? Is it okay to suggest every two minutes that a ref has managed to have sexual communion only with himself, to subject a man trying to do a difficult job to 90 minutes of loathing? And are football managers, with their constant complaining, encouraging the idea that refs and linesmen are all incompetent Mr Magooes who are genetically programmed to spoil everybody else's fun? In the Bath-Brive match in Bordeaux on Saturday the referee Jim Fleming was so whistle-bappy he would have stopped the half-time tea given the chance. Rugby has many problems — insane factionalism being one of them — but at least the ref can go about his trade without being constantly told he's some kind of monster.

Many commentators felt the attack on Edward Martin was another bad day for football. More than that it was another bad day for football fans, which isn't the same thing. The game itself can't always carry the blame because a small proportion of those who follow it are determined to behave so badly. All across England, in parks and pub football, refs are being abused and assaulted for indulging minor power addictions and trying to help 22 other people have a bit of fun. Cantona wasn't exactly performing a social duty in launching his studs into Matthew Simmons but at least he declined to buy into the idea that fans have a mandate to do or shout whatever they like. Football can't just be about supporters and their boundless wants.

Call goes out to collar Catt burglar

ANY seven-stone weakling seen swaggering down Twickenham's streets in Mike Catt's monogrammed England training shirt should be immediately detained under citizen's arrest; at least he should be easy to spot.

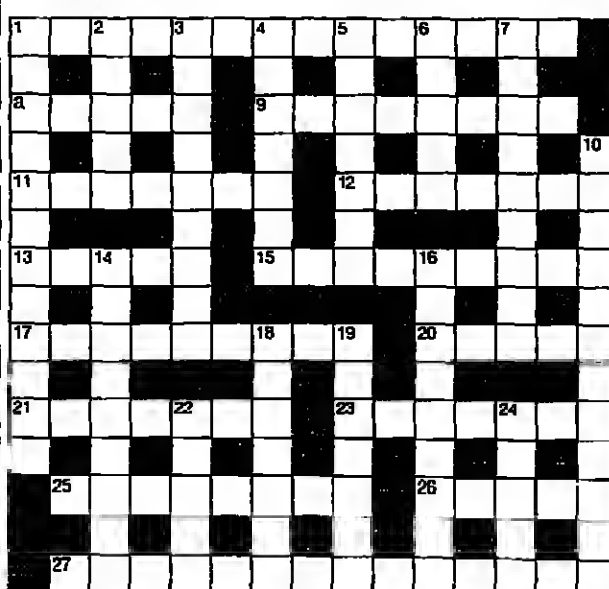
Items of Catt's kit, along with some belonging to the captain Lawrence Dallaglio,

were stolen from a van at HQ on Sunday night. The England coach Clive Woodward said, "It is of little value to anyone, as it is obviously official kit, with the players' names embroidered on to the items and therefore easy to detect."

Anyone with any information should call Pam Cartwright on 0181 631 6505.

Guardian Crossword No 21,188

Set by Mercury

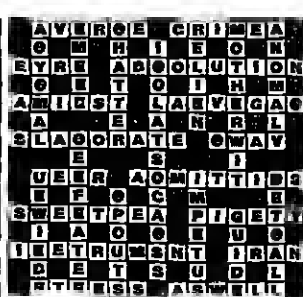


Across

- 1 Where children are taught to get on? (8,6)
- 5 First religious site specially designed for ceremonies (5)
- 9 Complaints made when old lady goes to toilet? (8)
- 11 Bolted relief valve to an old copper? (7)
- 12 Appointment accepted by stout preacher? (7)
- 13 Patient starts talking in class (5)
- 15 Endless street party gradually getting louder (9)
- 17 Putting tar in our silo turned out to be tedious (9)
- 20 Was inquisitive boy rejected by top journalist? (5)
- 21 Is having name and number inserted on key excessive? (7)
- 23 Entertainer needing car repaired to ring club (7)

Down

- 25 Tossing a caber? It could be a cause of disease! (8)
- 26 Individualist takes one in both hands (5)
- 27 Way of paying if transporting dray on vehicles (4,2,8)
- 1 Dog wanted to lie alongside miner endlessly (6,6)
- 2 Bill races one into the room (5)
- 3 Having spread dais with soft fruit, vanish (5)
- 4 Turned on crazy crossword compiler caught wandering (7)
- 5 Save cruel student being imprisoned (7)
- 6 Shy dropout hiding in special hotel (5)
- 7 Shades one entering closed back street (9)

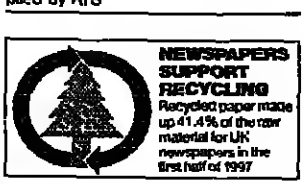


CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,187

- 10 Lie back before pushing point into floor (6,6)
- 14 Layers of earth under a bus start shaking (9)
- 16 Lieutenant admittedly against leading Italian singers (8)
- 18 Go on too long before function's finished (7)
- 19 Waves on lake damaged plant growing near the coast (3,4)
- 22 Cut a large amount up before church (5)
- 24 Refuse to go here having turned up, say, for a spree (5)

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Up to the last moment her case continues to draw support from unusual quarters. Pat Robertson, the TV evangelist, surprised even his own followers by calling her an 'extraordinary lady' The last hours of Karla Faye Tucker

G2 front

Joe 11/15/98